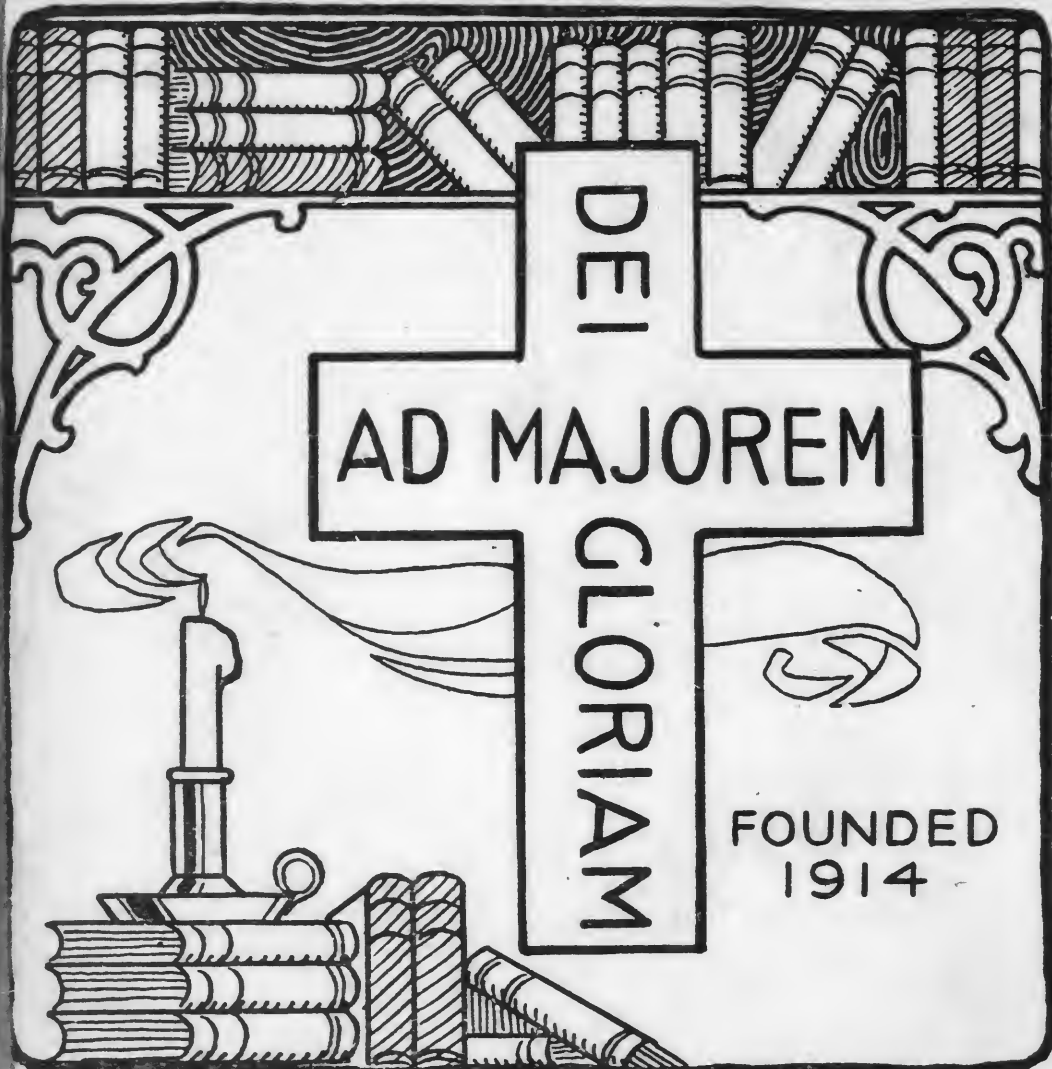


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THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.
THE LIFE OF BISHOP LATIMER.

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THE LIFE
OF
THOMAS CRANMER,

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GILPIN, M. A.

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THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

CHAPTER I.

THOMAS CRANMER was born at Aslacton, in Nottinghamshire, on the 2d of July, 1489. His father was a gentleman of small fortune, but the head of a family which had long lived in reputation in those parts. He was a lover of country diversions; and seems to have given his son an early taste for them.

The circumstances, indeed, of Mr. Cranmer's youth were not such as usually usher in the life of a scholar. No man could manage a pack of hounds better, or handle the long-bow with more dexterity, or with the cross-bow take a surer aim. In horsemanship he so excelled, that after he was an archbishop, he scrupled not to ride the roughest horse in his stables.

But amusements with him were only relaxations. He gave himself up to study with equal eagerness; and his proficiency in country diversions showed merely the versatility of his genius. The experiment, however, is dangerous; and the example not to be followed by

those who are not well assured they have his strength of parts, and steadiness of temper, to secure them from an extreme.

At the usual age Mr. Cranmer was sent to Cambridge, which was not then the seat of the Muses. Schoolmen were the classics of that age; and nothing was heard from the chairs either of science or religion, but what would have inspired an improved mind with disgust. This solemn trifling, which was then called "learning," engaged Mr. Cranmer at least ten years.

About the year 1520 Martin Luther began first to draw the attention of mankind. Many reformers before his day, particularly Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague, at different periods had seen and exposed, with great acuteness and strength of argument, the corruptions of the Church of Rome. But it pleased God to use these inquisitive minds only as the dawning of that day which he intended gradually to open. The corruptions of the church, therefore, having not yet received any effectual check, continued to spread; and in the days of Luther had grown to an enormous height. Venerality and rapacity were the reigning characteristics of the sovereign pontiff and of that band of ecclesiastics who retained under him. The very idea of religion was lost; except where it was necessary to uphold some parading ceremonies of the church; which were all the remains now left of Christianity. Morals were never thought of; and so far were the

ruling powers from being hurt by the scandalous lives of the clergy, that they invented every method to exempt them from the jurisdiction of all courts, except their own. In them every trespass found the gentlest treatment. An easy fine would satisfy even for murder.

Nor is it surprising, that the inferior clergy should lay aside all decency of manners, when they looked up to such pontiffs as had long filled St. Peter's chair; particularly Alexander VI. and Julius II. Even Leo X., flattered by the wits of the age as the reviver and patron of arts and letters, though an elegant prince, was a detestable ecclesiastic.*

We need not wonder, therefore, if so complex a system of corruption as the Roman hierarchy appears to have been at that time needed little developing. Luther's doctrines spread rapidly through Germany; and though it was the single corruption of indulgences which gave the first impulse to this disgust, yet from one error the minds of men presently passed to another; and the tenets of Luther were eagerly embraced, not only by the lower classes of people, but even by some of the princes of the empire, particularly by the elector of Saxony, one of the best, and by his sufferings shown to be one of the most magnanimous, princes of his time.

But though the ardent and intrepid spirit of

* They who wish to see the causes which advanced the Reformation drawn out at length, may find them detailed with great perspicuity and elegance, in the life of Charles V., by Dr. Robertson.

Luther had thus awakened a great part of Germany from its lethargy, yet his opinions found their way but leisurely into other parts of Europe. In England they were received with great caution. Serious men began to see the corruptions of the clergy; but they were afraid to question the infallibility of the pope. They were convinced of the propriety of seeking truth in the Bible, but examined with great timidity the doctrines it contained.

Indeed, as far as appears, the writings of Erasmus introduced the first idea of systematic reformation in England. This reformer was a man of a very different temper from Luther; and yet in his way, perhaps, he contributed as much to discountenance the corruptions of the Romish Church.

Luther, fearless in the path of truth, was animated, rather than daunted, by opposition: Erasmus, cautious and respectful to authority, shrank from danger, and sought truth only in the regions of tranquillity. Luther, in vehement language, talked of extirpating error, root and branch: Erasmus wished only to open the eyes of men, and to leave them by degrees to reform themselves: he satisfied himself by exposing what was wrong, but did not presume to point out what was right. Luther's opposition ran ever in the form of fierce invective or serious argument. Erasmus, though always in earnest, chose commonly to clothe his sentiments in ridicule. Luther was remarkable for the boldness of his measures, and a course of intre-

pid action : while Erasmus, trusting to his pen, never ventured abroad as the champion of religion, but defended it from his closet ; and the art of printing getting then into use, his opinions soon made their way into the different parts of Europe.

Thus it happened, through the providence of God, that these two men, though in different ways, were equally adapted to the work of reformation. If Luther were the more spirited reformer on the spot, Erasmus was better qualified to make proselytes at a distance. If Luther's rough and popular address were better suited to the multitude, the polished style and elegant composition of Erasmus found readier access to the gentleman and the scholar.

The works of this celebrated writer began to be received in England at the time when Mr. Cranmer was a student at Cambridge ; and all men who pretended to genius, learning, or liberality of sentiment, read them with avidity. To the general scholar they opened a new idea,—that of thinking for himself ; and to the student in divinity they pointed out the Scriptures as the only source of religious truth. The sophistry of the schools began apace to lose credit, and the universities soon produced ingenious men, who thought they could not employ their time better than in studying the naked text of the Scriptures, which at length drew on a freedom of inquiry. These students were commonly known by the name of “Scripturists.”

Mr. Cranmer ranked himself very early in

this class of men ; and with great assiduity applied to the study of the Scriptures. The more he studied, the more enlightened he grew ; he daily saw more reasons for rejecting the false aids in which he confided, and began to entertain many doubts and suspicions, which he yet kept to himself.

His mode of study was calculated for improvement rather than for ostentation. He read few books, but made himself a thorough master of those he did read. A "general scholar" he thought another name for a "superficial" one. His character as a student is thus marked by one of his biographers :—"In percurrendis, conferendisq[ue] scriptorum judiciis, tardus quidem lector, sed vehemens erat observator. Sine calamo nunquam ad scriptoris cujusquam librum accessit : ita tamen ut memoriam interim, haud minus quam calamum, exerceret."*

An imprudent marriage at this early period of his life interrupted his studies, and threw him out of his preferment in Jesus College, of which he had been elected a fellow. He was now reduced to difficult circumstances. The slender income of a lectureship, which he obtained in Magdalen College, seems to have been the whole of what he now enjoyed. But, though it produced him little emolument, it tended greatly to increase his reputation. His lectures, which were considered as ingenious and learned compositions, were always attended by a nu-

* MELCH. ADAM *Vitæ Theol.*

merous academical audience of every description. They were chiefly directed against the Romish superstitions. "He rubbed the galled backs," says Fuller, "and curried the lazy hides of many an idle and ignorant friar." I know not that these expressions give us a just idea of Mr. Cranmer's talents. They imply a sarcastic manner which was not his. Strong sense and argument were the only weapons he employed.

He had scarce been married a year, when his wife died; and such was his reputation in the university, and particularly in his own college, that on this event he was re-elected into his former station.

He had soon an opportunity of showing his gratitude. Some agents of Cardinal Wolsey being employed to draw together a body of learned men from both the universities to fill the college of Christ Church in Oxford, which that prelate had just founded, Mr. Cranmer, among others, was applied to; but he did not care to leave his old friends, to whom he had been lately so much obliged, though a better income was offered, and a more promising road to preferment.

In the year 1526* he took the degree of Doctor in Divinity. The Scripturists, it is evident, had great influence in the university at this time, as we find Dr. Cranmer appointed one of the examiners in theology.

* Strype is mistaken in fixing it in 1523.

In this situation he did very eminent service to religion by allowing no student to proceed to his degree who did not appear to be well acquainted with the Scriptures. His strictness, however, was tempered with so much gentleness and benignity, that the disappointed candidate, unless a very disingenuous man, plainly saw that the examiner's conscience drew from him a reluctant severity.

The university, however, soon felt the good effects of Dr. Cranmer's attention. The young divines caught a new object of pursuit, and entirely changed their mode of study. He would often afterward say, that in the course of his life, he had met with many eminent scholars, who had told him with great ingenuousness, how much they thought themselves obliged to him for the check he had formerly given them at Cambridge. "Had it not been for that," they would add, "we might have persisted, all our lives, in our early prejudices."

CHAPTER II.

WHILE Dr. Cranmer was thus employed, about the year 1529, an epidemical distemper, attended with many symptoms like the plague, broke out at Cambridge. A great alarm was spread; the schools were shut up; and every man endeavoured to provide for his own safety by flight. Dr. Cranmer retired into Essex, to

the house of Mr. Cressy, a gentleman of fortune at Waltham; whose sons had been his pupils at Cambridge, and whose education he still continued to superintend. These circumstances were the foundation of all his future fortunes.

That great ecclesiastical cause, King Henry's divorce, was at this time in agitation. The legatine court, which should have decided that business, was just dissolved, and had left the affair in its old uncertainty.

Henry's devotion to the see of Rome had made him thus far submit with patience to its delays. But his eyes were now in a great measure opened. He began to see that Clement, whose character was a compound of dissimulation and timidity, had been acting a double part; and that while he openly pretended every thing in favour of the divorce, he was, in fact, no other than the dupe of the emperor. With this clue the English ministry was able to unravel the mazes of the pope's duplicity; and this last affair, the dissolution of the legatine court, and the avocation of the cause to Rome after so many affected delays, at length convinced even Henry himself, that the pope meant nothing in earnest.

While the monarch, vexed at this new disappointment, was revolving in his mind the indignities he had suffered, he relaxed himself with a short journey, or "progress," as these journeys were then called, through some of the southern counties. On his return he spent a night at Wal-

tham; where his retinue, as was usual on such occasions, were lodged among the neighbouring gentlemen. Fox, provost of King's College in Cambridge, and Gardiner, afterward the celebrated bishop of Winchester, then attended the king; and were invited, with some others, to the house of Mr. Cressy, where they passed the evening with Dr. Cranmer. The conversation turned on the only topic which was then discussed among courtiers, the unhandsome behaviour of the court of Rome; and on all sides the pope's dissimulation, and the king's forbearance, were spoken of with acrimony and admiration.

Dr. Cranmer, who seemed to have digested the whole business in his mind, said he thought a method might be pursued which would tend to bring the matter to a happy issue. When all with great eagerness desired to know what he meant, he told them his idea was, to collect the opinions of all the universities in Europe on this simple question,—Whether it was lawful to marry a brother's wife. Their approbation of the marriage, he said, would satisfy the king's scruples, or their disapprobation of it would bring the pope to a decision.

Dr. Cranmer's opinion seemed very plausible both to Fox and Gardiner; who failed not the next morning to mention it to the king. It struck Henry at once; who, with that indelicacy which was natural to him, cried out, with an oath, that Cranmer had gotten the right sow by the ear.

He was immediately sent for, and had a long conference with the king; which ended in Henry's commands to put his sentiments in writing, both with regard to the divorce itself, and the manner in which he proposed to conduct it.

The great merit of Dr. Cranmer's proposal, which is not immediately evident, seems to consist not so much in changing the judges, as in narrowing the question. Instead of inquiring whether the pope's dispensation gave legality to Henry's marriage with his brother's wife, he wished to inquire simply whether such a marriage was not contradictory to the divine commands. If the universities determined that it was not so, the king must then give up his scruples and keep his wife. Of this, however, he was under no apprehension. But if the universities determined that such a marriage was unlawful, the king might then, if the pope were refractory, do without him, saying the marriage was in itself null.

Henry, therefore, being resolved to adopt this new plan, began next to adjust the proper mode of executing it. He read Dr. Cranmer's papers with great attention, and was persuaded that he who had shown himself so much a master of the case was the only person in whose management of it he could thoroughly confide. At the same time he thought an obscure ecclesiastic had not dignity of character enough to represent his person abroad. He joined, therefore, in commission with him, the earl of Wiltshire

and the bishop of London ; recommending him in a particular manner to the friendship of the former.

The earl of Wiltshire, with whom Dr. Cranmer ever afterward maintained a strict friendship, was one of the greatest ornaments of the English court. In a public character he had appeared to advantage ; once in Spain, and a second time in Germany. At home he had borne with equal credit the offices of treasurer of the household, and lord privy seal. In private life his manners were very amiable. He was one of the most learned men of his age, and one of the best philosophers ; and, though a courtier and a statesman, had employed much of his time in the study of the Scriptures, which he made the rule of his life. To his request it was owing that Erasmus composed his valuable treatise on a preparation for death. But what still made this excellent man more celebrated than all his virtues was, his being the father of Ann Boleyn, who was, at this time, well known to be the intended consort of Henry.

In the year 1530 the three commissioners set out on this extraordinary occasion, bending their course first to Italy, where they found success in some of the universities which were even dependant on the pope. Dr. Cranmer offered to dispute the matter fairly in the Rota.

The pope, at first, was very angry, declaring to those about him that he would not suffer his power to be discussed by friars ; alluding, probably, to the undignified character of Dr. Cran-

mer. But finding afterward of what consequence he was, he became very desirous of attaching him to his interest; and, with this view, conferred on him the office of penitentiary-general of England, with full powers to bind and loose. Dr. Cranmer could not avoid accepting the pope's favour; but, as it was a power he never meant to use, he considered it as a very insignificant sinecure.

At the end of the first year, the three delegates having traversed the universities of Italy, the commission was dissolved, and a new one made out, directed solely to Dr. Cranmer, who was styled *Consiliarius Regis, et ad Cæsarem orator*. It bears date January 24th, 1531. No disgust seems to have been taken at the other commissioners; but as Dr. Cranmer was the person on whom the king chiefly relied, it is probable he had, from the first, determined to intrust the matter solely to him, as soon as his character had acquired a little consequence.

Very great success attended his commission; few scruples were raised; and he had little more to do than to collect the hands and seals of such universities as favoured the king's intentions, which were, on the matter, almost all he applied to.

This expedition, so readily projected, and so cheerfully undertaken, does not, perhaps, place Dr. Cranmer in the most advantageous point of light. There were good political reasons, no doubt, to induce the king to wish for a divorce. His marriage with Catharine was by no means

generally approved either at home or abroad; the legitimacy of Mary, in treaties of marriage with neighbouring princes, had been questioned; and the terrible effects of the late civil wars in England, occasioned by disputed titles, were wounds not yet entirely healed. Male issue to the king, which might prevent such consequences, was, therefore, very desirable to all men.

But reasons of state, however admissible in a cabinet, should never be supposed to influence a churchman. We allow that Dr. Cranmer might think the marriage wrong; but though it possibly might be a point of conscience with the king, it could, however, be none with him; and there was manifestly a difference between advising not to do a thing and advising to undo it when already done, at least in a matter of so disputable a nature. He knew that in the Old Testament the marriage of a sister was allowed, and among the patriarchs often practised; and that the marriage of a brother's wife was in some cases enjoined. The New Testament was silent on the subject. There could, therefore, be no moral turpitude in it, nor any thing but the common law and usage of nations to restrain it. On the other hand, the baseness and ungenerous behaviour which followed the contrary part were evident at sight. To repudiate a woman with whom the king had cohabited near twenty years as his wife, and to render illegitimate a daughter bred up in the highest expectations and now marriageable, were acts

of such cruelty, that it seems to indicate a want of feeling to be in any degree accessory to them. To this may be added, that the notoriety of the king's passion for Ann Boleyn, which all men believed to be, if not the first mover, at least the principal spring of his pretended scruples, threw a very indelicate imputation on all who had any concern in the affair. No serious churchman, one would imagine, could be fond of the idea of administering to the king's passions. It is with concern, therefore, that we see a man of Dr. Cranmer's integrity and simplicity of manners acting so much out of character as to compound an affair of this kind, if not with his conscience, at least with all delicacy of sentiment; and to parade through Europe, in the quality of an ambassador, defending everywhere the king's "pious intentions."

But the cause animated him. With the illegality of the king's marriage, he endeavoured virtually to establish the insufficiency of the pope's dispensation; and the latter was an argument so near his heart, that it seems to have added merit to the former. We cannot, indeed, account for his embarking so zealously in this business without supposing his principal motive was to free his country from the tyranny of Rome, to which this step very evidently led. So desirable an end would, in some degree, he might imagine, sanctify the means.

'This was not the only foreign business in which Dr. Cranmer was employed. He was entrusted with many private despatches from

the king. He had matters of trade also to negotiate for the merchants of England. Once he was obliged to furnish himself with camp-equipage, and attend the emperor, who had taken the field against the Turks. In every employment he showed himself to be a man whose knowledge was by no means totally confined to his profession; but was of a more general cast than the simplicity of his character led men to suppose.

If Dr. Cranmer began to think favourably of the Reformation before he left England, he became, during his stay abroad, an entire convert. That freedom with which men discussed religious opinions in Germany was very agreeable to a man of his liberal turn; and he felt himself every day sitting looser to those prejudices which had hitherto involved him. Osiander, whom he found at Nuremburgh, contributed, among others, very much to enlighten his mind. The unrestrained conversation of this reformer appeared to him, at first, as a kind of libertinism; it sounded harshly in his ear; and he would ask, if such an opinion were false, how it could possibly possess itself of the minds of the greatest and most learned men of all ages, through such a tract of time. Osiander carried him boldly still higher into antiquity. "Tell me not," said he, "what Austin says, and Jerome; but what Peter says, and Paul. Read your Bible; and say honestly whether such and such doctrines are not plainly repugnant to such and such passages of Scripture."

CHAPTER III.

IN the midst of these researches, the attention of Dr. Cranmer was suddenly recalled to other objects. He received a message, informing him that the king intended to reward his services by bestowing on him the see of Canterbury, then vacant by the death of Dr. Warham.

Whatever exalted ideas Dr. Cranmer might entertain from the king's favour, it is very certain he was both surprised and perplexed at this message. Two things especially occurred to him as matter of great difficulty. The first was the oath he was obliged to take to the pope, which appeared to him as an insuperable obstacle. The other was a more private concern. He had engaged abroad in a second marriage; and, however liberal his own sentiments might be on that subject, he knew the prejudices of the world ran strongly against him. I call them "prejudices" only, because I think it does not appear that the secular clergy, at that time, were absolutely required to take the vow of celibacy.

Whether he urged his scruples to the king, (who, in a matrimonial business could not surely be a rigid casuist,) does not appear. It is certain, however, that the affair of the marriage was made easy to him; and that the king's message brought him immediately to England.

History does not fix the time of his return with any precision. Lord Herbert says, he was present at the king's marriage with Ann Boleyn; which the latest accounts celebrate on the 25th of January, 1533. Archbishop Parker says, he actually performed the ceremony. Fox says, it was impossible; for he was certainly then in Germany. The controversy is scarce worth deciding.

In however contemptible a light the pope's authority was at this time considered, the new archbishop, it seems, could not legally be consecrated without bulls from Rome. Henry, it may be imagined, might have dispensed with this form; but to get rid of forms is often the last work of reformation. The price of the commodity, however, was greatly fallen. The popes formerly exacted more than a thousand pounds of our money for their bulls of consecration; but the new archbishop, or rather the king, who seems to have managed the matter, contrived to procure them for less than half that sum.

With regard to the oath of fidelity to the pope, which the archbishop was obliged to take at his consecration, he protested that he took it in no sense but such as was wholly consistent with the laws of God, the king's prerogative, and the statutes of the realm; that he did not bind himself from speaking his mind freely in matters of religion, the government of the church, and the rights of the crown; and that he meant, on all

occasions, to oppose the pope's illegal authority, and condemn his errors.

This oath, taken in a sense so very opposite to its real intention, has often been alleged against the archbishop; and, indeed, it seems rather to injure the feelings of a delicate mind. His friends, however, suppose they sufficiently apologize for his behaviour by observing that he made his exceptions in an open manner, without any mental reservation; and that he fully satisfied those who were empowered to administer the oath.

Thus was a private churchman raised, at one step, to the first dignity of his profession; and though the truth of history hath obliged us to confess that he took some steps not quite so direct as might be wished in this hasty advancement; yet we cannot by any means consider him as a man who had formed any settled plans of ambition, which he was resolved at all hazards to support; but that, in what he did amiss he was rather violently borne down by the king's authority. His mildness and simplicity were unequally matched with the impetuosity of Henry; who, having no scruples of his own, considered little the scruples of others. To this may be added, that the primate thought himself strongly attached by gratitude to his prince. And indeed the errors of this excellent person, as we shall have other occasions to observe, were less owing to the temptations of vice than to the weakness of some unguarded virtue. Thus much at least may be said in apology for those

parts of his conduct at this time, which seem rather to require one.

As to the king, his placing so good a man at the head of the church deserves little praise. If we may judge from the general tenour of his character, which was throughout unprincipled and inconsistent, he meant nothing more than to advance a man who had shown himself so ready a casuist, and was able to take so vigorous a part against the Church of Rome, which Henry was at this time determined to oppose.

Very soon after his consecration, the primate was called on to finish the great cause of the divorce by passing a final sentence.

The queen had retired to Ampthill, a royal mansion near St. Alban's, where she lived with great discretion; and drew the pity and respect of the whole nation by the decency and dignity of her sufferings. The town of Dunstable, which lay almost in sight of her windows, was appointed by Henry, with his usual indelicacy, as the place where the archbishop and his associates were to sit in consistory. As Henry well knew the queen would not answer the summons, the vicinity of the place being of no consequence, had the appearance of an additional affront.

The queen treated the summons she received with that indignation which was expected; and, being pronounced contumacious, a final sentence of divorce was passed.

There was something also very indelicate in placing the primate at the head of this court, as

he had already taken so principal a part in the cause. It gave great offence to the queen, and shocked the archbishop himself; but Henry, who had no idea of decency, would hear no reason against it.

Within a few weeks after the divorce, on the 7th of September, 1533, the Princess Elizabeth was born; and the king ordered the archbishop to be her godfather.

CHAPTER IV.

THE definitive sentence which had passed in England, it may easily be supposed, occasioned much clamour at Rome, where menaces of excommunication, in a very lofty tone, were thrown out. In return, the king and the primate joined in an appeal to a general council, a theme then very popular both among Protestants and Papists. This appeal they notified to the pope, who was then at Marseilles. It was intrusted to the care of Bonner, afterward the celebrated bishop of London, who executed his commission with his usual vehemence. The incensed pope, on the other hand, equally impetuous, talked of throwing the minister headlong into a cauldron of molten lead; on which Bonner, alarmed at the idea, precipitately retired.

Francis I. was at this time joined in bonds of the strictest amity with England. The part which Henry had taken in the affairs of Europe

after the fatal battle of Pavia, had riveted the generous heart of the French monarch to him with more than political friendship. Francis had seen, with real concern, the progress of the breach between Henry and the see of Rome; and had resolved to take this opportunity of an interview with the pope, to endeavour to repay his obligations to the king of England by bringing his disagreeable difference with the pontiff, if possible, to an accommodation. He made the attempt, but found the pope full of resentment; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he at length prevailed on him to promise, that Henry might still expect a favourable sentence from the conclave, if he would make his submission before a short day, which was appointed. But this was only half the obstacle. Henry was as lofty as the pope, and could as ill brook submission as the other could bear control.

There happened to be in the French king's retinue at Marseilles, a churchman of very eminent abilities,—Bellay, bishop of Bayonne. An accidental circumstance had just thrown the eyes of all men upon him. The night before the pope made his public entrance, it was discovered that the president of the parliament, who had been appointed to receive him with a Latin oration, had unluckily chosen a subject which would certainly give the pontiff offence; and yet there was no time for a new composition. In this article of extremity, when the whole business of the ceremonial was deranged, Bellay offered his service to speak extempore;

and did it with such uncommon propriety and elegance, that he was marked from that time as a man of the first genius in France.

This person the French king made choice of to persuade Henry into the agreement he had just made with the pope. The bishop knew mankind, and could adapt himself to their foibles. Henry was well tinctured with the erudition of those times; and affected greatly the character of being a patron of learning. Bellay knew him thoroughly; and drawing the discourse from business to letters, would often put him in mind of the great reputation he had in Europe for learning; and how much the whole Catholic cause was indebted to his pen. By artfully insinuating these topics, he at length engaged Henry to accept the accommodation which Francis had made for him, and to send a courier with his submission to Rome.

This treaty with the pope was not transacted so secretly, but in part it transpired, and gave the first alarm to the Protestant party; whom it entirely convinced of the fickleness of the king's temper, and of the slender grounds they had for the certainty even of a bare toleration. None was more distressed than the archbishop; but, with his usual calmness and caution, he held his peace; and trusted for the protection of religion to that Almighty hand which had begun the reformation of it.

In this suspense the minds of men remained many weeks; and they whose principles waited on every change began already to waver, and

to talk publicly of the precipitancy of the late innovations, which ran the risk of throwing the kingdom into such a ferment as could not easily be allayed.

At length the long-expected courier arrived from Rome, and produced a new agitation in the minds of men. All was now declared to be over; and such a breach made with the pope as could never again be healed.

The account of the matter was this. Contrary winds had detained the courier, it seems, beyond his day. The bishop of Bayonne (who, after all his services in England, had himself undertaken a voyage to Rome to negotiate with the pope) pressed his holiness to make some allowance for the uncertainty and danger of winds and seas, especially as it was then in the depth of winter; and to suspend a definitive sentence for one week only. But the emperor's influence, and the pope's own irascible temper, prevailed for hastier measures. Nay, even the usual forms of business were accelerated; and, after a shorter hearing than in such a case was commonly allowed, a definitive sentence was passed, confirming the king's marriage with Catharine; and declaring him excommunicated, if he did not put away his present queen.

Two days after the definitive sentence had passed, the king's submission arrived. The pope stood aghast: but it was now too late; the sentence could not be reviewed; the cardinals of the opposition holding firm to the established

rules of the conclave. If any event could authorize man to point out the immediate finger of God, this certainly might.

Many historians have entertained doubts of the king's sincerity in this business; and it is certain the parliament, at this time, was beginning to take measures not very agreeable to the popish interest. But however this may be reconciled, it is difficult to say what Henry's meaning could be, if it was not pure. He had already felt his own strength, and was under no necessity either to amuse or temporize; nor was duplicity among those faults which are commonly laid to his charge.

While affairs with the court of Rome were thus depending, the emissaries of the popish party allowed themselves unbridled license in England. We are amazed that such a prince as Henry could bear to be told in his own chapel, that, unless he restored religion, dogs should lick his blood, as they had licked the blood of Ahab. But there was a grossness in the manners of those times, which we must carry along with us in all our inquiries into them. The actions of men were perhaps more restrained than they are now; their tongues were certainly more licentious; and Henry, who had no idea of delicacy himself, was less offended than might be imagined at the gross indelicacy of others.

But of all the efforts of the popish clergy at this time, the delusions of the maid of Kent were the most extraordinary. This enthusiast, falling into artful hands, was managed in such

a way as to draw the attention of the whole kingdom. Her prophecies were uttered in very free language, and she poured the vengeance of Heaven, with a very liberal hand, on the king and his abettors. Her impostures were at length detected, and she suffered death with her accomplices.

CHAPTER V.

THE parliament, in the meantime, took vigorous measures in support of religious liberty. Such a spirit was raised in the commons, that they debated freely on the great question of the supremacy of the pope; a question which, if ever moved before, had been always treated with the utmost distance and timidity. It was carried, however, now against the see of Rome with a very high hand.

In elder times, when parliaments questioned only some exorbitant claim of the pope,—his power to raise money in England, or to confer benefices on foreigners,—however spirited such inquiries appeared at the time, posterity saw they had been carried on without foresight. A few branches might be lopped off; but as the trunk itself was left standing, it was able, at the returning season, to shoot as vigorously as before.

One would have imagined that an act so destructive of popery as the Act of Supremacy would, at least, have been retarded by some dis-

senting voices, among so many, who were friends to the see of Rome in their hearts. But though it met with opposition, yet it was much less opposed than could have been imagined; and by few persons of consequence. Lee of York, Tunstal of Durham, and Stokesly of London, all papists, and two of them bigoted, acceded to it. Gardiner was even strenuous in its support. "The realm and the church," said he, with that subtlety which was characteristic in him, "consist of the same people. And as the king is head of the realm, he must, therefore, be head of the church."

This act was obtained chiefly by the abilities of the primate, who discovered such a fund of learning and good sense on the question, and delivered his sentiments in such a flow of natural and easy eloquence, that he silenced opposition, and gave his cause all the lustre which reason and argument could give.

When the prejudices of men began to cool, and the consequences of this very important act were seriously considered, all sober men of every denomination acknowledged the utility of it. They hoped a more orderly clergy would now succeed, whose manners might be more easily inspected, and whose conduct would be amenable to civil authority. They hoped an end would now be put to those contests between the civil and ecclesiastical powers which had often cost the nation so dear. They saw a way opened for the redress of many grievances, which could not easily approach the court of

Rome at so remote a distance, and so intrenched in forms. In short, they foresaw a variety of advantages from the simplicity of the government as it was now established, and from the abolition of that gross absurdity in every political system, an *imperium in imperio*.

The Protestants had still further cause for rejoicing. They considered this act as the only thing which could open a way to reformation; for, though in itself it had no immediate connection either with doctrine or discipline; yet, without it, no step could be taken toward the reformation of either. Besides, they thought the abrogation of the decretals was a great step toward the introduction of the Bible; and imagined they should be able, through so wide a breach, to push out every error and every corruption of the church.

When this celebrated act passed, another, as a kind of appendage to it, passed also,—the Act of Succession, which settled the crown on the children of the present queen; declaring Mary, the daughter of Catharine, in effect, illegitimate.

This act involved in ruin two excellent men,—Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More. The parliament had declared the denial of the king's supremacy to be high treason; and imposed a test oath to be taken by all people in office, and indeed universally, if required. Fisher refused it; and More, when questioned, talked in very ambiguous language. He might as well have spoken plainly. Henry, impatient of control, considered his ambiguity as guilt. The

primate laboured, with every application of his interest and talents, to preserve these victims of lawless power. With More he had lived on terms of great familiarity, and was prompted to employ even casuistry to save him. "On one hand," said he, "you are doubtful as to the point in question. On the other, you are certain you ought to obey your prince. Let doubt then give way to certainty." More smiled, and laid his head upon the block.

This was not the only innocent blood which was shed at this time. That queen, for whose sake Henry had put away a wife with whom he had lived twenty years, was herself, in little more than three, become the object of his aversion, and was condemned to death on the merest surmise. A few unguarded expressions were the utmost that could be proved against her. She was a lady of a gay and lively temper; and, in such dispositions, little verbal levities are not only consistent with the purest manners, but even sometimes, perhaps, indicative of them. Henry, however, wished not to find her innocent; and indiscretion had the force of crime.

Among the many suspicious circumstances which attended this very mysterious affair, it was not one of the least, that during the discussion of it, the archbishop was directed, by an order from the king, to keep his house at Lambeth. The popish party were universally bent against the queen, and, it was supposed, were afraid of the primate's interposition and influence.

Henry, however, when it served his purpose introduced him as an actor in the affair. The life of the queen was not all that the king aimed at: her daughter, the Lady Elizabeth, must also be declared illegitimate, to make way for the posterity of his future consort. To this end he resolved, on the strength of some surmise of a precontract, to be divorced from her before he put her to death. But though the earl of Northumberland, who was supposed to be the other party, made the most solemn allegations that no such contract had ever existed, yet the king was determined she should be found guilty; and the archbishop was to be his instrument. To him, it is said, the queen made a private confession of her crimes; and the comment of history on her confession is, that having been sentenced to be burned, or beheaded, as the king pleased, she was terrified into a confession, to avoid the more rigorous part of the sentence. On the strength, however, of this confession, the archbishop passed a sentence of divorce.

Immediately after this sentence, she was beheaded; and the king, void of every idea, not only of feeling, but of decency, the very next day married Jane Seymour. By this precipitancy, however, he made a better apology for the unfortunate Ann Boleyn than the most zealous of her advocates could have done.

When we consider the whole of this black affair,—the want of legal evidence to prove any crime, yet a sentence of death passed in conse-

quence of that insufficient proof ; a precontract supposed, which was to void the marriage, and yet the crime of adultery still charged ; the terrifying mode of the sentence ; and, above all, the king's known attachment to another lady ; we are surprised to find a man of the archbishop's character submitting, in any shape, to be an actor in so complicated a scene of barbarism, cruelty, absurdity, and injustice. The confession had certainly all the appearance of being extorted ; by both parties the contract was denied on oath ; and if both parties had even confessed it, it is probable that the archbishop might have found strong arguments to prove, in any other instance, that a consummated marriage was a more inviolable bond than a precontract ; and still more so, if the parties first contracting had given up their mutual vows. The whole, in short, has the appearance of a dishonest submission to a tyrant's passions ; and we can apologize for it only as we have done for some other of this prelate's compliances, by supposing that his meekness was violently borne down by the king's impetuosity.

Indeed, the plenitude of a king's power was never so thoroughly impressed upon the minds of men as in this reign ; though it took in future reigns, as far as such jargon can do, a more systematized form. The *vox Dei*, which was afterward too freely supposed to issue from the people, was, however, now supposed to issue solely from the throne. When, therefore, we find these great condescensions to a prince in

men of eminent characters, we must not measure them by the liberal notions of later times ; but must make some allowances for those high ideas of kingly power which prevailed in those periods in which they lived.

It is true, we are told, the primate made a spirited application to the king in the queen's favour ; but on this apology, it is probable, none of his advocates will be very forward to expatiate. The more innocent he thought her, the more guilty he must think himself.

How far his acting *ex officio* was an apology, let those define who think themselves obliged to perform the functions of an office which requires unlawful deeds.

CHAPTER VI.

QUEEN ANN's death was considered by the popish party as the signal of victory. They had little conception that the Protestants could unite under any other leader, who could have interest with the king. But they formed a wrong judgment ; and had the mortification to see the primate's influence in no degree diminished. All, therefore, who wished well to a reformation looked up to him as the only person who was capable of conducting it. And, indeed, he was every way qualified to answer their wishes. By prudent caution, discreet forbearance, and pure simplicity of manners, he

was able to oppose and counteract the designs of some of the most artful men of his time ; for there are seasons when simplicity will have the advantage of art, and will mislead even the designing man, who, judging from his own feelings, considers a plain and open behaviour as a mask.

It was very necessary, indeed, that the Protestant cause should have at least one able leader ; for, except the archbishop himself, there was not a man who favoured it, and had the power to conduct it. The earl of Essex, it is true, who was then secretary of state, was a man of great ability. No one had taken a juster measure of the times, or understood with more exactness that difficult part of the ministerial office, the management of parties. But Essex sat at another helm, which called for all his address ; and he could rarely assist the archbishop, however well inclined, except when the affairs of the church coincided with the business of the state ; nor was he enough acquainted with theological matters to give a consequential opinion in any of the intended alterations of religion.

Among the bishops of those times who favoured the Reformation, were Latimer, bishop of Worcester, Shaxton, of Salisbury, and Barlow, of St. David's. These were the primate's natural coadjutors ; but none of them was able to give him any material assistance.

Latimer possessed every virtue that could adorn a Christian prelate. No man opposed vice more successfully, or kept the clergy of

his diocese in better order. But in traversing the arts of party he had no address. Perfectly sincere himself, he had little comprehension of the duplicity of others; and seemed to think that nothing was requisite to give either party or an individual a proper direction, but a genuine display of truth. He considered only what was right to be done; not what the times could bear.

Shaxton had lived more in the world than Latimer, but was still a worse associate to the archbishop. He had an unaccommodating sourness about him, which was continually taking or giving offence. His moroseness was marked strongly in the lines of his visage, which almost prejudiced men at sight against every proposal he could make. Nor was he without a tincture of pride and self-importance; which are bad in any man, worse in a churchman, and worst of all in a reformer.

Barlow was as little depended on by the archbishop as either of the others. He was a man of sense and learning; but was so indiscreet, so totally unguarded, and his conversation so full of levity, that the primate was always afraid of any communication with him on matters of business; and would sometimes say, on coming to the conclusion of a long debate, "This is all very true; but my brother Barlow, in half an hour, will teach the world to believe it is but a jest."

Perhaps, indeed, it was not to be regretted that the primate had no associate Under the

wise counsels of one prudent man, the arduous business of reformation, probably, prospered better than it could have done in the hands of many. In the whole system of human affairs, it is certainly the nicest point to conduct the religious opinions of the public. The more quietly and gently every change is introduced, the better. Altercation is fatal to the attempt; and altercation is generally found in a multiplicity of voices. A multiplicity of opinions succeeds a multiplicity of voices. The passions, armed with religious zeal, soon enter the lists; and all is presently confusion.

The wisdom and decisive judgment of a single leader prevented this. By attending carefully to times and seasons, and throwing out only such innovations as he found men were able to bear, the prudent archbishop introduced imperceptibly the most consequential changes.

His difficulties, however, were very great. To form a religious establishment out of the general confusion in which all things were now involved, appeared a work of infinite perplexity. That flux of opinions which the Reformation occasioned was an endless source of discord; and the more men receded from that central point of authority which had drawn them together, the wider they spread from each other. Every man had his favourite tenet, in which he thought the sum of Christianity consisted: little sects began to form themselves; and the primate soon found how impossible it was to impress

the large idea of religion upon the narrow mind of party.

The same diversity of opinion which distracted the people was found among the leaders. Every one had his own creed ; and the mischief was, that no man thought it a hardship to impose his own creed on others. Some thought the ceremonies only of the Romish Church were antichristian, and adhered with firmness to its doctrines. Others rejected the doctrines, but were dazzled with the splendour of its ceremonies. Some, again, thought it prudent, as a conciliating measure, to retain every thing that could be retained with innocence ; while others cried out loudly for utter extirpation, and thought the farther they got from popery the nearer they advanced to truth.

The difficulties in the way of reformation, which arose thus from the different opinions of Protestants, were still greatly increased by the opposition of papists. This large body of men, it may easily be imagined, were more than ordinarily inflamed by the turn which affairs were likely to take against them. If they were before formidable for their numbers, they now became more so, when embodied in a suffering cause, supporting one common end, and availing themselves of all those arts which are generally made use of by the instruments of declining party. Among these arts, the most obvious and the most effectual was, to foment jealousy and discord among the various sectaries of the new religion ; to which, of themselves, they were sufficiently inclined.

But the difficulties which arose from the popish party would have been more easily surmounted if the king had not been at its head. The fame which Henry had acquired as "defender of the faith," had invariably attached his haughty mind to the doctrines of popery. The supremacy, indeed, flattered his ambition; and he was glad, as far as that was an object, to coincide with the circumstances of the times; but he was careful to have it believed that he was no convert to the opinions of the new faith, and that his heart had not received the least impression against the religion of his forefathers. Whatever advantage, therefore, the Protestants gained during this reign, they were entirely indebted for it, either to the pride, the caprice, or the interest of the king.

Amidst all these difficulties the archbishop endeavoured gradually to mature in his own breast every part of the great scheme he had in view, before he ventured to bring it forward.

He began, in the spirit of equity, with redressing the abuses of his own courts; though, together with these abuses, he retrenched his own fees and those of his officers. This gave the public an early and favourable impression of his designs.

The great number of idle holydays with which the calendar was charged became the next object of his censure. The archbishop himself, to the astonishment of those around him, sat down to a hot supper on the eve of St. Thomas of Canterbury. As these holydays

interfered with seedtime and harvest, it was generally not unpopular to abolish them.

It was popular also, as well as highly necessary, to regulate the public discourses of the clergy. The pulpit eloquence, indeed, of that time was little more than a gross attempt to exalt the power of the church. The good archbishop saw its abuse, and endeavoured to make it the vehicle of instruction. But the regulations he yet made were few. With his usual caution, he felt his ground as he proceeded; and it was not till long afterward that he completed his intention on this head by the publication of the homilies.

How exceedingly a reformation in preaching was wanted, we may judge from the following extracts from sermons, which we may suppose were the best the times produced, as they were thought worthy of being made public. In one of these sermons, the priest, inveighing against irreverence to the ministers of religion, tells the following story: "St. Austin," says he, "saw two women prating together in the pope's chapel, and the fiend sitting in their necks writing a long roll of what the women said. Presently letting it fall, St. Austin took it up, and asking the women what they had said, they answered, 'Only a few paternosters.' Then St. Austin read the bill, and there was never a good word in it." In another sermon we are told, that "four men had stolen an abbot's ox. The abbot did a sentence, and cursed them. Three of them were shriven, and asked mercy; the

fourth died without being absolved. So when he was dead, his spirit walked by night, and scared all who stirred from their houses after sunset. It happened that once, as a priest went in the night with God's body to a sick man, the spirit met him and told him who he was, and why he walked, and prayed the priest to tell his wife to make amends to the abbot, that he might absolve him; for he could have no rest till then. So this was done; and the poor soul, at length, went to rest." In a sermon upon the mass, the people are told that, among the benefits arising from it, "on the day they hear it all idle oaths and forgotten sins shall be forgiven. On that day they shall not lose their sight, nor die a sudden death, nor wax aged; and every step thitherward, and homeward, an angel shall reckon." The immediate tendency of such discourses was obvious.

CHAPTER VII.

THUS far the primate, however cautious, ventured with less hesitation; what he had yet done was little more than fell under his own proper authority; but it required more address to strip the popular opinions of the times of that error and absurdity which adhered to them. Some steps, however, were taken, which at least narrowed a few of the grossest of the popish doctrines.

Tradition was not expressly disavowed ; but the Bible and creeds were made the rule of faith. Images were not forbidden ; but the people were instructed to consider them only as incentives of devotion. Prayers to saints were allowed ; but Christ's sole mediation with the Father was insisted on. Sprinkling holy water, scattering ashes, and creeping to the cross, were tolerated ; but the people were assured they made no atonement for sin. The existence of purgatory was not disputed ; but all indulgences and mercenary pardons were declared invalid.

How far indeed the archbishop himself was enlightened, cannot easily be known at this day ; but it is probable, that, whatever had been his own private opinions, he would not have ventured further in public than he now did.

The doctrine of transubstantiation was left precisely as it stood. Our ecclesiastical writers all agree that the primate himself held that opinion till within a few years of his death ; which is the more surprising as Wicliffe, near two centuries before, had said much to bring it into discredit. How firmly attached the primate was to it at this time, appeared on the following occasion :—

John Lambert, a man of eminent piety, having denied the real presence, was cited before the archbishop ; who, with a mixture of mildness and gravity, expostulated with him on his maintaining so unscriptural an error. Lambert retired modestly ; but it appearing afterward

that he was not converted, the affair was carried before the king. The king, resolving himself to confute so notorious a heretic, cited him to enter into free debate on the subject. The royal pedant entered the place of combat surrounded by his bishops and nobles. The archbishop sat at his right hand, and assisted at this very extraordinary disputation. Lambert, being confounded with an assembly so little suited to the freedom of debate, yielded an easy victory to the king; who, triumphing over him in the true spirit of a polemic, condemned him to the stake. We do not find that the archbishop took any part in his death: it were to be wished he had rid his hands of the disputation likewise.

The primate showed the same attachment to the doctrine of transubstantiation on another occasion. Vadian, a learned foreigner, having written a treatise against the corporeal presence, thought it a proper work for the archbishop of Canterbury to patronize, and presented it to him; concluding that his grace's opinions on that subject were as liberal as his own. But the archbishop was not a little displeased. — He informed Vadian, that his book had not made a convert of him; and that he was hurt with the idea of being thought the patron of such unscriptural opinions.

In the year 1538 the archbishop finished a great work which he had long had in hand,—the printing of an English Bible.

Wicliffe was the first Englishman who un-

dertook to render the Holy Scriptures into his native tongue. But Wicliffe's translation was now obsolete, and to be found only as a matter of curiosity in a few libraries. In the year 1526 Tindal translated and printed the New Testament in the Low Countries. But his translation, which was rather a hasty performance, was very incorrect; and nobody was more sensible of its deficiencies than Tindal himself. He was public-spirited enough to have amended the faults of it by a new edition, but his finances were too scanty for such an undertaking. The zeal of Tunstal, bishop of Durham, furnished him the means. Tunstal, though a papist, was the most moderate of men; and being desirous of removing a stumbling-block as quietly as possible, he privately bought up the whole impression at his own expense, and burned it.* This money being returned into Tindal's hands, enabled him to republish his work in a more correct form. By the great industry, however, of the popish party, this edition also was in a good measure suppressed; and indeed it was

* A copy of this impression, supposed to be the only copy remaining, was picked up by one of the late Lord Oxford's collectors; and was esteemed so valuable a purchase by his lordship, that it is said he settled £20 a year for life on the person who procured it. Lord Oxford's library being afterward purchased by Osborn, at Grey's Inn Gate, this curious book was marked by the undiscerning bookseller at fifteen shillings only, at which price Mr. Ames bought it. When Mr Ames's books were offered to the public by Mr. Langford, in May, 1760, this book was sold by auction for fourteen guineas and a half. In whose hands it is now I have not heard.

at best an inaccurate translation, being the performance only of a single man, who laboured also under many disadvantages.

This version, however, inaccurate as it was, the archbishop made the basis of the work he now intended; and the method he took was, to send portions of it to be corrected by the bishops, and other learned divines; reserving to himself the revisal of the whole.

Stokesly, bishop of London, was the only prelate who refused his contribution. "It is no wonder," said one of the archbishop's chaplains, with more humour than charity, "that my lord of London refuses to have any hand in this business: it is a testament, in which he knows well he hath no legacy." This Bible, through the means of the Lord Essex, was licensed by the king, and fixed to a desk in all parochial churches.

The ardour with which, we are informed, men flocked to read it, is incredible. They who could, purchased it; and they who could not, crowded to read it, or to hear it read, in churches; where it was common to see little assemblies of mechanics meeting together for that purpose after the labour of the day. Many even learned to read in their old age, that they might have the pleasure of instructing themselves from the Scriptures. Mr. Fox mentions two apprentices, who joined each his little stock, and bought a Bible, which at every interval of leisure they read; but, being afraid of their master, who was a zealous papist, they kept it

under the straw of their bed. Such was the ecstasy of joy with which this blessing was received at that time, when it was uncommon.

Soon afterward, under the authority of convocation, the archbishop took a further step.—The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments were allowed to be taught in English. A plain exposition also of the more obvious points of faith and practice was published in a treatise, which was generally called "the bishop's book," from the hands through which it went: its real title was, "The Institution of a Christian Man." It was afterward enlarged and published under the royal license; and then became the king's book.

These were the principal steps which the archbishop took in the business of reformation,—all taken between the years 1533 and 1538. His difficult circumstances allowed no more. It is wonderful, indeed, he did so much; for, except in matters of supremacy and transubstantiation, the king and he had very different sentiments on every topic of religion; and the passions of Henry, those gusts of whirlwind, made it dangerous for any one to oppose him.—But the archbishop, though he tried this hardy experiment oftener than once, never lost his favour. In the business of monasteries he risked it most.

Henry had already laid his rapacious hands on some of the smaller houses; and finding the prey alluring, he determined to make a second and more daring attempt. The larger houses

afforded his avarice a more ample range. The affair was brought into parliament; and men seemed to think they were at liberty to speak their opinions freely. They agreed that the wealth of the church was a dead weight on the nation; that it debauched the clergy, and drained the people; and that it was just and right to lay public hands on this useless mass of treasure. At the same time, having been shocked at seeing the king appropriate to himself, as he had lately done, the piety of ages, or lavish it in wanton donations on the avarice of his courtiers, they cried, "Let us strip the clergy of their wealth; but let us pass a law that it may be employed in some national service."

Of the party which held this language, the archbishop was at the head. With great earnestness he spoke in this cause; and proposed various schemes for throwing this mass of sacred treasure into some useful channel. He mentioned the endowment of schools, the maintenance of scholars at the universities, the foundation of hospitals and alms-houses: "Nay, rather," said he, "than suffer it to be consumed in private channels, let us expend it on high-roads."

One of his schemes was new, and seems to have been happily conceived. He proposed to institute colleges of priests in every cathedral, composed of students, just removed, and well recommended, from the universities. Here they were to apply themselves to divinity under the eye of the bishops; who, being thus ac-

quainted with their worth and abilities, might transfer them from these seminaries to parochial charges.

But this, and all his other beneficial schemes, were overruled. The king was determined to apply this wealth to other uses, and hinted his intentions to the house in a very intelligible manner. The royal hint gave a sudden change to the deliberations of parliament. Every man trembled at the idea of opposition. Simple terror effected then what venality hath since effected. Essex immediately gave way. The boldest speakers were silent. The primate's was the last mouth which opened in this cause. His honest zeal showed the goodness of his heart; and that was the reward of his labour.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE opposition which the king met with in this business from the Protestant party, is thought by many historians to have lessened the archbishop's influence, and to have thrown weight, at this time, into the opposite scale. It is certain, the bishop of Winchester and other leaders of the popish party began now to assume unusual spirits, and to appear with more importance at court.

The bishop of Winchester was one of those motley ministers, half-statesman and half-ecclesiastic, which were common in those needy times, when the revenues of the church were neces-

sary to support the servants of the crown. It was an invidious support, and often fastened the odium of an indecorum on the king's ministers; who had, as ministers always have, opposition enough to parry in the common course of business; and it is very probable that Gardiner, on this very ground, hath met with harder measure in history than he might otherwise have done.

He is represented as having nothing of a churchman about him but the name of a bishop. He had been bred to business from his earliest youth; and was thoroughly versed in all the wiles of men, considered either as individuals or embodied in parties. He knew all the modes of access to every foible of the human heart; his own, in the meantime, dark and impenetrable. He was a man "who," as Lloyd quaintly says, "was to be traced like the fox; and, like the Hebrew, to be read backward;" and though the insidious cast of his eye indicated that he was always lying in wait, yet his strong sense and persuasive manner inclined men to believe he was always sincere; as better reasons could hardly be given than he had ready on every occasion. He was as little troubled with scruples as any man who thought it not proper entirely to throw off decency. What moral virtues and what natural feelings he had were all under the influence of ambition; and were accompanied by a happy lubricity of conscience, which ran glibly over every obstacle. Such is the portrait which historians have given us of this man; and though the colouring may

be more heightened in some than in others, yet the same turn of feature is found in all.

This prelate, being at the head of the popish party, and aided by the duke of Norfolk's influence, thought he had now an opportunity to strike a blow which might be fatal to the Protestant cause. The times favouring him, he insinuated to the king, that the measures he was now pursuing had placed him in a very precarious situation with regard to foreign powers; that the German Protestants would in all probability be crushed; and that, if this should be the case, it was very likely, from the temper and situation of men and things, that his majesty would see a very formidable league excited against him by the popish princes; that it was prudent, at least, to guard against such an event; and that it might easily be done by enacting some laws in favour of the old religion, which might show Christendom that he had not set his face against the church, but only against the supremacy of the pope.

This language, in a prudential light, was more than plausible; and it had its full effect on Henry, especially as it coincided with his own apprehensions. For the enterprising spirit of Charles V., then in league with the pope, seemed to be carrying every thing with a full tide of success in Germany; and to have nothing so much in contemplation as to re-establish through Europe the spiritual dominion of the pope.

An alteration in the public faith was then a

matter of easy decision. The king's inclination alone was sufficient to enforce it. The duke of Norfolk, therefore, as had been agreed, informed the house of the king's wish to show his regard to the old religion; and as it would be agreeable to his majesty to have every body think as he did, the duke presumed that nobody wished to think otherwise.

The king's ideas were received with reverence, and the whole house became immediately zealous papists; and passed an act, which had been framed by Gardiner, in favour of some of the more peculiar doctrines of the Roman Church,—transubstantiation, communion in one kind, vows of chastity, the celibacy of the clergy, private masses, and auricular confession. This act, which passed in the year 1539, is known by the name of the Act of the Six Articles; and was guarded, according to the supposed degrees of guilt, by fines, forfeitures, imprisonment, and death.

The good archbishop never appeared in a more truly Christian light than on this occasion. In the midst of so general a defection, (for there were numbers in the house who had hitherto shown great forwardness in reformation,) he alone made a stand. Three days he maintained his ground, and baffled the arguments of all opposers. But argument was not their weapon; and the archbishop saw himself obliged to sink under superior power. Henry ordered him to leave the house. The primate refused: it was God's cause, he said, and not man's. And

when he could do no more, he boldly entered his protest. Such an instance of fortitude is sufficient to wipe off many of those courtly stains which have fastened on his memory.

As the primate himself was a married man, it hath been said he was particularly interested in this opposition ; and it is certain, that as soon as the act passed, he sent his wife, who was a niece of Osiander, into Germany. But Mr. Strype gives us good reason to believe that his chief objection to any of these articles was the cruelty of the penalties with which they were guarded, so alien, he thought, to the spirit of Christianity.

It is amazing that the very extraordinary freedom which the archbishop took on this occasion did not entirely ruin him in the king's favour. Indeed, all men expected to have seen him sent immediately to the tower. But Henry's regard for him was so far from being lessened, that he ordered the duke of Norfolk, with the earl of Essex, and others, to dine with him the next day at Lambeth, and comfort him, as the king phrased it, under his disappointment. "My lord archbishop," said Essex, "you were born in a happy hour. You can do nothing amiss. Were I to do half of what you have done, my head must answer it." A prophetic speech, as it afterward appeared!

This singular visit at Lambeth, though so well intended by the king, was the source of great mortification to all. The conversation,

after dinner, falling on the late ministry, and Wolsey's name being mentioned, Essex could not forbear drawing a parallel between the archbishop and the cardinal. "The cardinal," said he, "through the violence of his temper in managing a debate, would often change his friends into enemies; whereas the mildness of the archbishop often makes his enemies his friends." The duke of Norfolk adopted the remark; "and surely," said he, with a sarcastic sneer, "nobody knew the cardinal better than my Lord Essex, who was once his menial." Essex answered with some warmth, that he was not the only person in company who had served the cardinal, at least, who had shown an inclination to serve him; for, if fame spoke truth, the great duke of Norfolk himself had offered to be the cardinal's admiral, if ever he should attain the papacy. The duke of Norfolk, firing at this, started up, and, with a vehement oath, cried out, he lied. Essex, preparing to resent the affront, the archbishop got up, and, with the rest of the company, interfering, composed the quarrel at that time; but the duke laid it up in one of those secret chambers of his memory, where those affronts are registered which nothing but blood can expiate.

The arguments which the archbishop had used in parliament against the Act of the Six Articles had been represented to the king in so strong a light, that he expressed a great desire to see them; and the archbishop accordingly had them fairly copied out for his inspection.

The fate of the volume in which they were contained occasioned some perplexity.

Among the amusements of the English monarchs of those times, that of bear-baiting on the river Thames was in high esteem. In this diversion Henry happened to be engaged when the archbishop's secretary took boat at Lambeth, charged with his master's book to Westminster. The waterman had orders to keep as far as possible from the tumult; but, whether led by curiosity to see the pastime, or through some unavoidable accident, he found himself presently in the midst of the crowd; and, by a mischance still greater, the bear, making directly to his boat, climbed up the side, and overset it. The secretary was soon taken up; but, recovering from his surprise, he found he had lost his book: he hoped it might have sunk to the bottom; but he discovered, afterward, that it had fallen into the hands of some ignorant persons, who had conveyed it to a popish priest. The priest, conceiving it to be a satire on the Six Articles, determined to carry it to the council. The secretary, in the meantime, suspecting what might happen, applied to Lord Essex, as his master's friend. He had scarcely told his story when the priest appeared at the door of the council-chamber with the book under his arm. Lord Essex addressing him in an angry tone, and telling him that the book belonged to a privy counsellor, the priest delivered it up, with many humble gesticulations, and was glad to get off without farther question.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Act of the Six Articles was a signal to the whole popish party. They now plainly saw their power; and had only to exert it properly. The parliament and convocation were the scenes of action. Here the primate, almost single, opposed them. A few of the bishops lent him aid; but it was feeble. They were either uninterested in the cause, or men of no abilities in business. One or two of them, from whom he expected assistance, deserted him. But the severest loss he felt at this time was that of his great friend, the earl of Essex.

The interest of that eminent statesman declined with that of the Protestants; and he paid at the block the penalty of his master's offences. The dissolution of monasteries had given general disgust. The alms and hospitality of the monks, indiscriminately administered, had, through a course of ages, invited sloth; and these channels of ready supply being now stopped, the necessitous found it irksome to exchange a life of idleness for a life of industry. A general discontent soon finds a mouth to express it. Clamour grew loud, and the king's government uneasy. Something must necessarily be done.

Among all the arts of expediency laid up in the cabinets of princes, the readiest is to sacrifice a minister. The death of Cromwell was represented to the king as the best means of

composing the people. But though prudential reasons may necessitate a prince to discard a minister, yet guilt only, and that nicely examined, can authorize an act of blood. The hand of a tyrant, however, generally throws aside the balance. It is a nice machine, and requires pains and temper to adjust it. The sword is an instrument more decisive and of easier despatch. Henry's was always stained with blood; often with innocent blood; but never with blood more innocent than that of Essex.

Among the many friends of this great man, several of whom had tasted largely of his bounty, not a single person endeavoured to avert his ruin but the primate. He, with generous friendship, wrote to the king; united himself with the falling minister; and endeavoured, at the hazard of his own safety, to inspire his royal master with ideas of justice. But the fate of Essex was decreed; and so light a thing as a whisper from the still voice of justice could not avert it. History unites in marking the duke of Norfolk and the bishop of Winchester as the secret contrivers of this base affair.

The primate and Essex had ever maintained a uniform friendship for each other, through every period of their power. It was a friendship pure from jealousy on both sides. Amidst all the jarrings of court faction, nothing ever disturbed it. Each knew the integrity of the other's intentions, and each supported the other's schemes with an exertion of all his interest. In some things, perhaps, the zeal of Essex for

his friend was apt to carry him too far; and the primate had oftener than once occasion to repress it.

A priest near Scarborough, sitting among his companions, over his beer, at the door of a country ale-house, and somebody happening to mention the archbishop; "That man," said the priest, "as great as he is now, was once but an ostler; and has no more learning than the goslings yonder on the green." Essex, who had his spies in every quarter, was informed of what the priest had said. A messenger was immediately despatched for him; and he was lodged in the Fleet.

Some months elapsed when the archbishop, who was entirely ignorant of the affair, received a petition from the poor priest, full of penitence for his imprudence, and of supplication for mercy.

The primate having inquired into the business, sent for him. "I hear," said he, "you have accused me of many things; and, among others, of my being a very ignorant man. You have now an opportunity of setting your neighbours right in this matter; and may examine me, if you please."

The priest, in great confusion, besought his grace to pardon him: he never would offend in the same way again.

"Well, then," says the archbishop, "since you will not examine me, let me examine you."

The priest was thunderstruck; making many excuses; and owning he was not much learned in book-matters.

The archbishop told him he should not then go very deep; and asked him two or three of the plainest questions in the Bible: "Who was David's father? and who was Solomon's?"

The priest, confused at his own ignorance, stood speechless.

"You see," said the archbishop, "how your accusation of me rises against yourself. You are an admirable judge of learning and learned men. Well, my friend, I had no hand in bringing you here, and have no desire to keep you. Get home; and if you are an ignorant man, learn at least to be an honest one."

Soon after the earl of Essex came to the primate; and, with some warmth, told him he might for the future fight his own battles,—that he had intended to have made the priest do penance at Paul's-cross; but his grace's misjudged lenity had prevented him.

"My good lord," said the primate, taking him by the hand, "be not offended. I have examined the man myself; and be assured from me he is neither worth your notice nor mine."

Notwithstanding, however, the loss of his great associate, the archbishop did not despair. An attempt was made in convocation to revive some popish ceremonies. A sort of ritual was produced, which consisted of ninety articles. The archbishop, unaided, went through the whole; and reasoned with such strength of argument, as brought over many to his opinion. Whom he could not convince, he silenced.

The next field in which he appeared was the

house of lords, where he himself made the attack, by bringing in a bill to mitigate the penalties of the Six Articles. This was a bold attempt, and drew on him the whole force of opposition. The bishops of Rochester and Hereford, who had promised to assist him, gave way, as the debate grew warm; and begged the archbishop to follow their example. It was in vain, they told him, to persist: he could not benefit his cause; but he might ruin himself. The archbishop, with that spirit which he always exerted where religion was concerned, declared himself careless of any consequence.

His perseverance had an effect which he durst not have hoped for. The laity were entirely exempted from the penalties of the act; and the clergy were in no danger till after the third conviction. The primate obtained also that no offences should be cognizable after they had lain dormant a year. It is not improbable that he was indebted for this victory to the book which he had sent to the king; the rigour of whose opinions it might, in some degree, have qualified.

In another effort, also, the primate obtained an advantage. He prevailed with the king to allow the use of a few prayers in the English tongue; which was the first attempt of the kind that had been made.

On the other hand, he had the mortification to see the use of the Bible taken away. Winchester brought the affair into convocation. In the debate which ensued, the translation was

chiefly objected to, "Let the people have their Bible," said Winchester, "but let it be a correct one; and let not error and heresy be spread by authority." He proposed, therefore, to have the Bible carefully examined; and with this view to have it put into the hands of the bishops; where he doubted not he had influence to suspend it, as long as he pleased. The primate saw his policy, and with all his weight opposed him. He wished to preserve the present translation, even with all its inaccuracies; which he thought better than to run the risk of a new one. But he could not prevail. One point, however, he gained. Instead of putting the Bible into the hands of the bishops, he got it put into the hands of the two universities, which he supposed would be less subject to popish influence.

He was right in his conjecture; for the universities were very speedy in their revision. But the primate had the old battle to fight again. Though a more correct Bible was produced, yet the same opposition was still made to its publication; and new topics of argument were introduced. The archbishop, however, had now encouraged a considerable party to second him; and the affair was combated with great vigour. But the opposition of the popish party became so formidable, that the archbishop was again entirely deserted. Single, however, as he had done before, he still bore up against his adversaries; and persevered, till, by dint of perseverance, he obtained a limited use of the

Bible, though it was never publicly allowed during the remainder of Henry's reign.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE the primate was acting this great and noble part in parliament, an unexpected event placed him in a very delicate and dangerous situation. At an early hour in the morning an unknown person of the name of Lascelles desired a secret admittance to him; and with much hesitation opened an affair which the archbishop would often say gave his spirits a greater agitation than he ever felt before or after. The affair was no less than the discovery of the queen's incontinence.

The primate, with his usual caution, weighed the information, and the proof on which it rested: and he had the more time for deliberation, as the king was then on a progress. If the information were justly founded, it was both wrong and dangerous to conceal it; if unjustly, it was equally so to divulge it. The dilemma was difficult.

The business was perplexed, also, by a circumstance of peculiar delicacy. The queen was niece to the duke of Norfolk, who was at the head of the popish party; and the good primate, who had seen with what sinister arts that class of men had carried on their schemes, was apprehensive that such a story as this

might have too much the air of retaliation, and the malignity of party ; and, if it should prove false, would fix an imputation on his character which he had ever been careful to avoid. His enemies, he knew, were always on the watch against him ; and might, for aught he knew, have taken this very method of doing him an injury.

Thus distracted by a view of the affair in every light, he went at last to the lord chancellor, and the earl of Hertford, whom the king had left with a commission of regency, during his absence ; and to them he unbosomed his distress.

After the first impression of terror was over, with which the privacy of such an affair naturally struck every one who was connected with the tyrant, the chancellor and Lord Hertford were both of opinion, that, as the affair rested on such undoubted evidence, it was less hazardous to divulge than to conceal it. This point being settled, the more arduous one still remained of informing the king. The primate thought it best that all three should join in the information, and give it that weight which no single person could give. The two lords, on the other hand, were of a different opinion. As the intelligence, they said, had been given to the primate, and they had only been consulted, the information would come most naturally from him. Besides, they remarked, it was more respectful to keep a matter of so delicate a nature in a single hand ; and if so, the primate's eccle-

siastical character and well-known judgment, made him the properest messenger of bad news; as, when he had given the wound, he could pour in balm to heal it. In conclusion, the meekness of the archbishop gave way; and he took upon himself alone the task of carrying the unwelcome truth to the king.

It was indeed an unwelcome truth. The king, at this time, had so little conception of the queen's dishonesty, and loved her with such entire affection, that he had lately given public thanks for the happiness he enjoyed with her.

The method which the primate took was, to draw up the whole affair on paper, with all the evidence on which it rested, and present it to the king in private.

Henry took the information as we may suppose he would. His fury broke out in vehement execrations, and threats against those who had been the contrivers of such villany. And yet even in his rage he seems to have spared the archbishop, as a man who might be imposed on, but could not intend deceit. By degrees, however, as his royal fury subsided, and he examined the evidence coolly, it made a deep impression on him; and passions of another kind began to rise. In short, the queen and her accomplices were tried, condemned, and executed. A little before her death, she confessed her guilt to the archbishop; and the full voice of history bears testimony to the justice of her sentence.

About the time in which the archbishop was concerned in this affair, he was engaged in another almost equally invidious,—the visitation of All-Souls College in Oxford. That society was in much disorder: their dissensions gave great offence, and the irregularity of their manners still greater. They are taxed, in the language of those times, with their scandalous computations, commessations, and ingurgitations. The archbishop, as visiter, was called in by one of the contending parties; and he found it no easy matter to compose their heats and restore good manners. With his usual vigour, he went through the disagreeable task; and having mixed as much lenity as possible with his censures, he reviewed their statutes, and made such additions as he hoped would prevent any misbehaviour for the future.

In the year 1542, which was the year after these troublesome affairs, happened the battle of Solway-moss; where the Scottish army received a total defeat. Many of their nobility, being taken prisoners, were sent to London, and committed to the care of the most considerable persons about the court. The earl of Cassilis was sent to Lambeth. Here he found himself in a school of philosophy and religion; where every thing great and noble and liberal abounded. Cassilis himself had a turn for literature; and soon became enamoured with this amiable society. The gentleness and benevolence of the archbishop, in particular, attracted his esteem, and brought him to think more favourably

of the reformers; to whose opinions he soon became a thorough convert. Scotland had not yet received the tenets of the Reformation; and the archbishop would often say, that when it should please God to enlighten that country, he hoped the intimacy which had subsisted between him and the earl of Cassilis might not be wholly without effect. And in fact it proved so; for some years afterward, when the reformed opinions got footing in Scotland, nobody contributed so much to establish them as that nobleman.

CHAPTER XI.

THOUGH it might be supposed that the queen's death would have weakened the popish cause, yet we do not find that it produced any such effect. Many remarked, that after the first heat of the rupture with Rome, the king had been gradually returning toward it; and that, with regard to all the doctrines of popery, he was, at this time, more zealous than he had ever been; and they accounted for it very plausibly by observing, that as his passions began to cool, the religious fear took more possession of him.

The popish party, it is certain, at this period assumed unusual spirits; and thought they had influence enough to obtain any point.

One morning the primate was surprised with a message from the king, who lay off Lambeth in his barge, and wished immediately to speak with him. As he came on board, the king called out, "I can now inform you who is the great-

est heretic in Kent ;” and, ordering the barge to row gently up the river, he seated the archbishop by him, and produced a large book, which, he said, contained an accusation of several of the Kentish ministers against their diocesan.

The archbishop, who was not very present in the article of surprise, gazed first at the king and then at the book ; and could not, in some minutes, collect an answer. The king bade him not be distressed : “ I consider the affair,” said he, “ merely as a combination of your enemies ; and as such I shall treat it.”

Commissioners were soon after appointed to examine the evidence against the primate ; and at the head of the board the king, with his usual indelicacy, placed the primate himself. The archbishop was shocked at this designation ; and could barely be prevailed on to appear once at the opening of the commission. It sufficiently showed, however, how the king stood affected ; and saved the archbishop’s advocates the trouble of any laboured defence. Each of the accusers endeavoured, with what art he was able, to withdraw himself from a business which was likely to bring him so ungrateful a return.

The chief contriver of this whole affair was the bishop of Winchester, who, with great assiduity, had collected a variety of passages from sermons and other discourses, in which it was supposed the archbishop had shown more regard to the “ new learning,” as Protestantism was called, and the professors of it, than the laws then in force allowed.

Among other agents whom Winchester employed, he drew over, by his insinuating arts, two persons who were very nearly connected with the archbishop himself,—Dr. Thorndon, suffragen of Dover, and Dr. Barber, a civilian. Each of them had been promoted by the archbishop, and held an office under him; and both had been always treated by him on the footing of intimate friends. Barber even lived in his house; and had a pension settled on him, that he might be ready with his advice on every occasion. When the proofs, therefore, of this confederacy were put into the primate's hands, we may suppose his astonishment on finding a letter from each of these persons, containing a variety of matter against him, which his familiarity and unreserved freedom with them had easily furnished.

Soon afterward, when these two persons happened both to be with the archbishop at his house at Beckesburne: "Come your ways with me," said he, leading them into his study, "I must have your advice in a certain matter."—When he had carried them to a retired window in the room, "You twain," he resumed, "be men in whom I have had much trust; and you must now give me some counsel. I have been shamefully abused by one or twain, to whom I have showed all my secrets. And the matter is so fallen out, that they have not only disclosed my secrets, but also have taken upon them to accuse me of heresy, and have become witnesses against me. I require you therefore

to advise me how I shall behave myself to them. You are both my friends: what say you to the matter?"

Whether they had any suspicion of the archbishop's meaning, does not appear: as the question, however, was put, they could not avoid pronouncing with great severity against such villany. The primate then drawing the letters from his bosom, "Know you," said he, "these papers, my masters? You have condemned yourselves. God make you both good men. I never deserved this at your hands. If such men as you are not to be trusted, there is no fidelity to be found. I fear my left hand will accuse my right." Having said this, he added, after a pause, that they might rest assured, he would take no steps to punish their baseness; but he thought it fit to discharge them from his service.

The king, however, treated the archbishop's accusers with more severity; and threw many of them into prison. This alarming Gardiner, he wrote a letter to the primate in the following abject style:—

"GENTLE father, I have not borne so tender a heart toward you as a true child ought to bear; though you never gave me occasion otherwise; but rather by benefits provoked me to the contrary. I ask mercy of you with as contrite a heart as ever David asked of God. I desire you to remember the prodigal child. I am full sorry for my fault; heartily confessing my rashness and indeliberate doings. Forgive

me this fault, and you shall never hereafter perceive, but that at all times I shall be as obedient as ever was child to his natural father. I am yours, and shall be yours ; and that truly while I live. Good father, I have given myself unto you, heart, body, and service. And now remember that I am your true servant."

This letter, though it appears from Winchester's future life, to have been a mere artifice, so wrought on the gentle nature of the primate, that hearing the king was resolved to lay Winchester's letters before the house of lords, he went to him, and at length prevailed on him not to give the bishop any further trouble, but to let the matter drop.

The event of this accusation checked the ardour of the archbishop's enemies for some time ; but it revived again in about two years, on the death of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk.

With this nobleman the king had preserved, through life, a friendship, of which it was not thought his heart was susceptible ; and on hearing of his death, he pronounced a short eulogy on his memory, which was beyond the most laboured panegyric. The news was brought to him in council : "God rest his soul !" said the king, with much emotion : "he was an honest man. I have known him long ; and never knew him speak a bad word behind the back of any man." Then turning round the board with a sarcastic air, "Of which of you, my lords," added he, "can I say as much?"

The duke's amiable manners had long engaged the esteem of the archbishop; whose virtues, in return, were equally admired by the duke. A very sincere friendship subsisted between them; and it was thought the persuasive arguments of the primate had drawn the duke to think favourably of the reformers, whose friend and patron he was generally esteemed.

Though the duke had ever been a cautious man, and interfered little in public affairs; yet, considering his favour with the king, the popish party thought his death of great advantage to their cause. They conceived that it might both weaken the Protestant interest, and tend also to lessen the king's regard for the primate.

Elated with these hopes, the bishop of Winchester and his emissaries beset the king, now yielding to age and infirmity; and endeavoured to awaken his religious fears. "In vain might wise laws struggle with heresies, if the patrons of those heresies were above law. Of his majesty alone redress could be had. He was God's vicegerent, to rectify the abuses of the times; and might be assured, the sword was not put into his hands in vain: he was accountable for the trust."

From hints they proceeded to plainer language; and at length, in direct words, informed the king, that while the archbishop sat in council nothing effectual could be consulted about religion. They prayed his majesty, therefore, to give leave for the primate to be sent to the tower; and it would then be seen how ample a

charge against him would appear. The king pondered, and consented.

That very evening, as it grew dark, Henry sent for the archbishop to Whitehall. He was walking pensively in a long gallery, when the archbishop entered. "My lord of Canterbury," said the king, "I have given permission to have you sent to the tower. Some lords of council have dealt with me to that purpose. They have grievous things to lay to your charge, which they dare not utter while you have free admission to the board."

The archbishop expressed his readiness to have his conduct inquired into, in whatever manner the king thought fit; and offered to go, with great alacrity, to the tower, till he had fully answered the accusations of his adversaries.

The king, interrupting him, as his manner was, with a burst of vociferation, expressed his surprise at the primate's simplicity; but immediately softening his voice, told him that it was much easier to keep him from the tower, than to deliver him out of it. "You will be sent for," said he, "in the morning, by the council; and dealt with haughtily. If the lords talk of committing you, desire you may first hear your accusers. If they deny this, appeal to me; and take this ring, which you may show them as a token."

At eight the next morning, the archbishop was accordingly called before the council; and was kept some time standing at the door. Be-

ing admitted, he punctually followed the king's directions; and when the lords insisted on sending him to the tower, he appealed to the king, who had taken the affair, he told them, into his own hands. As he said this, he produced the ring, which was a token very well known.

Every one present was confounded; and the Lord Russel, starting up, cried out with an oath, "I told you, my lords, how it would be; and that the king would never suffer him to be committed."

When the affair was brought before the king, he made a short business of it. Striding haughtily round the room, and throwing an eye of indignation, first on one, and then on another; "I thought," said he, "I had a discreet council; but I see I am deceived. How have ye handled here my lord of Canterbury? What made ye of him? a slave; shutting him out of the council-chamber among serving men. I would have you to understand, by the faith I owe to God," (laying his hand solemnly on his breast,) "that if a prince can be beholden to a subject, I am to my lord of Canterbury; whom I account as faithful a man toward his prince, as ever was prelate in this realm; and one to whom I am sundry ways beholden; and, therefore, he that loveth me will regard him."

Having said this, he strode out; and left the lords endeavouring which should apologize to the primate in the highest strain of compliment. Next day, the king sent several of them, as was

customary with him, after such dissensions, to dine with the archbishop at Lambeth.

There is something singular in this whole affair. It is difficult to say, whether Henry was at first in earnest, and afterward changed his resolution; or whether he took this method to check the forwardness of the archbishop's enemies.

While this scene was acting in the council, a part of the same plan was preparing in parliament. There Sir John Goswick, in a studied harangue, accused the archbishop of being an upholder of heretical opinions; with which he had greatly infected the county of Kent. Henry, being informed of this motion, called a gentleman in waiting, and sent Sir John this message:—"Tell that varlet Goswick, that if he do not presently reconcile himself to my lord of Canterbury, I will punish him for the example of others. What knows he of my lord's preaching in Kent? Was not he, at that time, in Bedfordshire?" The message was very intelligible; and had its full effect.

CHAPTER XII.

BUT it was not only in matters of religion that every advantage was taken against the archbishop; the most trivial cavils were often made. He had enemies ready for any species of calumny; and Sir Thomas Seymour, who had abilities to object to nothing else, was able

to object to the meanness of his housekeeping. On this head he threw out insinuations to the king. Henry heard him with apparent indifference; and carelessly answered, "Ah! Seymour! and does my lord of Canterbury keep as little hospitality as you say? In good faith, I thought the contrary."

The king said no more, but took an early opportunity to send Sir Thomas, on some frivolous message, to Lambeth, about dinner-time. When he came there, he was carried through the great hall, where a bountiful table was spread, though only in its ordinary manner. From thence he was conducted up stairs to the archbishop, where he found a large company just sitting down to dinner; among whom the archbishop, in his usual hearty manner, insisted that Sir Thomas should take a place.

The next time the king saw him, "Well," said he, "Seymour, what cheer had you at Lambeth? for I suppose my lord would keep you to dine."

The poor man, confounded at the question, and seeing plainly the king's meaning, threw himself at his feet, and begged his majesty to pardon the foul slander with which he had aspersed the archbishop. He then frankly mentioned all he had seen; and concluded with saying, he believed nobody in the realm, except his highness himself, kept such a table.

"Ah! good man!" said the king, "all he hath he spendeth in housekeeping; and if he now keep such a table as you say, it being nei-

ther term, nor parliament, he is meetly visited, at those times, I warrant you. But," added the king, assuming a severer tone, "I know the bottom of all these falsities. You want to have a finger in church matters, do you? But you may set your heart at rest: while I am king there shall be no such doings."

These insinuations with regard to the archbishop's great economy seem, in some degree, to have been credited by Sir William Cecil; who in a letter told the primate freely what was current at court,—that he and all the bishops were immensely rich; and that they had nothing in view but raising princely fortunes for their families. The archbishop's answer to Cecil is so ingenuous, and bears so strong a stamp of honesty, that it is well worth transcribing:—

"AFTER my hearty commendations and thanks, as well for your gentle letter as for the copy of the pacification; and for your good remembrance of the two matters which I desired you not to forget; the one concerning the bishop of Cologne's letters, and the other concerning Mr. Mowse; for whom I give you my most hearty thanks.

"As for your admonition, I take it most thankfully, as I have ever been most glad to be admonished by all my friends, accounting no man so foolish as he that will not bear friendly admonition. For myself, I fear not that saying of St. Paul, which you quote against me, half so much as I do stark beggary. I took not so

much care about my living when I was a scholar at Cambridge as at this present; and if a good auditor had my accounts, he would find no great surplusage to grow rich on.

“As to the rest of the bishops, they are all beggars except one man; and I dare well say he is not very rich. If I knew any bishop that were covetous, I would surely admonish him.

“To be short, I am not so doted as to set my mind upon things here; which I can neither tarry long with, nor carry away with me. If time would have served, I would have written longer; but your servant, making haste, compeleth me to leave off; beseeching Almighty God to preserve the king and all his council, and send him well from his progress.

“Your own ever, T. CANTUAR.”

These invidious reports with regard to the avarice of the bishops are commonly ascribed to the avarice of the courtiers, who were desirous of adding the revenues of the bishoprics to the spoils of the monasteries. The wealth of the bishops, therefore, was the fashionable court-topic of that day; and every patriot declaimed on the expediency of stripping them of their temporalities, and settling pensions on them, that they might not be encumbered with secular affairs.

Henry knew well the meaning of this language; and alluded to it when he told Sir Thomas Seymour, he “wanted to have a finger in church matters.”

But though Henry would not allow his courtiers to strip the clergy of their possessions, he was very well inclined to do it himself. His method was, to oblige the bishops to make disadvantageous exchanges with crown lands. In this way he stripped the see of Canterbury, during Archbishop Cranmer's time, of £150 of annual rent; and the archbishop would often hint, that if he were less hospitable than his predecessors, a reason might be given.

During the short remainder of Henry's reign, the archbishop met with no further disturbance of any kind; his enemies being now convinced of the king's resolution to screen him from all attacks. Indeed, the protection which Henry at all times afforded him, in opposition to his own irritable and implacable temper, the genius of his religion, and the bias of bigotry, makes one of those strange contradictions which we sometimes meet with, but cannot account for, in the characters of men.

It is somewhat singular that Henry, on one of these late attacks, observing the mildness of the primate's temper, the acrimony of his adversaries, and the danger he must necessarily run when deprived of the protection of his prince, gave him for his arms, as if in the spirit of foresight, three pelicans feeding their young with their own blood; and added, in an odd jumble of coarse metaphor, "that he was likely to be tasted, if he stood to his tackling."

The last act of his reign was an act of blood, and gave the archbishop a noble opportunity of

showing how well he had learned that great Christian lesson of forgiving an enemy.

Almost without the shadow of justice, Henry had given directions to have the duke of Norfolk attainted by an act of parliament. The king's mandate stood in lieu of guilt; and the bill passed the house with great ease.

No man, except the bishop of Winchester, had been so great an enemy to the archbishop as the duke of Norfolk. He had always thwarted the primate's measures, and oftener than once had practised against his life. How many would have seen with secret pleasure the workings of Providence against so rancorous an enemy, satisfied in having themselves no hand in his unjust fate! But the archbishop saw the affair in another light; he saw it with horror; and although the king had in a particular manner interested himself in this business, the primate opposed the bill with all his might; and when his opposition was vain, he left the house with indignation, and retired to Croydon.

While the king was pushing on the attainder of the duke of Norfolk with such unjust and cruel precipitancy, he was himself hastening apace to the grave. He had long been an object of disgust and terror. His body was become a mass of fetid humours; and his temper was so brutal, that if he had not been diverted by a stratagem, he would have put his queen to death, only for differing from him on a point of theology; a queen, too, whose daily employment it was to sit for hours on her knees before

him, dressing the offensive ulcers of his legs. His attendants approached him with trembling. One or two of them ran the risk of losing their heads, only for intimating their fears about his health. It was prognosticating his death, and amounted nearly to high treason.

Disease at length subdued this brutal spirit. When he was now almost in the article of death, Sir Anthony Denny ventured to hint, with great delicacy, that his physicians thought his majesty's life in some danger. Henry took the admonition patiently; for he felt nature speaking a less ceremonious language within. He was just able to order the archbishop to be called.

When the primate came, he found the king speechless, extended on a couch, his eyes glazed and motionless. His attendants had ventured now to throw off all disguise; and the real sentiments of the heart, on this great occasion, were visible on every enlightened countenance. The archbishop's sensations were very different. His were the painful feelings which arise from pity mingled with a high sense of gratitude, where there could be no real esteem, and where, in an hour of the greatest distress, there was no possibility of being of service. With an eye melting in tenderness, he leaned over the dying king, and sympathized with every pang. Henry did not yet seem entirely deprived of intellect. The primate begged him to give some sign of his dying in the faith of Christ. Henry made an effort to grasp his hand, and expired.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE death of Henry, which happened in the year 1547, opened a new scene. On producing his will, it appeared that sixteen of the leading men of the kingdom were appointed regents. They were restrained by many limitations; but under these, a majority were allowed "to govern the kingdom as they thought fit." This happy clause overturned all the rest. Henry had composed the regents as equally as he could of both parties in religion; and hoped, that by keeping things during his son's minority in the same hesitating situation in which he had left them, he might prevent their running into extremes. But it happened otherwise. A majority plainly inclined to the Protestant cause, either from conscience or interest; and they thought themselves fully authorized, by the precept of the will, "to govern the kingdom as they thought fit." The earl of Hertford, the king's uncle, was created duke of Somerset, and chosen protector. The other regents immediately became ciphers.

The archbishop, though placed at the head of the regency, rarely interfered with state affairs, and gave little interruption to the ambition of his compeers. In ecclesiastical matters he took the lead; and every thing that was done in this department, during Edward's reign, may be considered as done by his authority.

But it would interfere too much with the nature of such a work as this, to enter into a mi-

nute detail of all the changes which were made in religion. Such a detail appears more properly in works appropriated to these inquiries.* Here it is proposed only to illustrate the character of this excellent prelate; and it will be enough to touch so far on the changes he made, as to throw a proper light on his wisdom, prudence, learning, moderation, and firmness.

The first step he took regarded the settlement of the supremacy; a point which he had exceedingly at heart, as the foundation of every thing else. He formally, therefore, petitioned the young king, that, as he had exercised the office of archbishop under his father, he might be permitted to exercise it under him; and he would perform no episcopal duty till his new license was made out. This example he proposed should be enforced on the clergy.

Thus authorized, he proceeded to the affairs of religion. But before any thing was done, he thought it right to show the necessity of doing something; and to this purpose a general visitation was made. Abuses of all kinds were inquired into,—corrupt doctrines, corrupt practices, superstitious ceremonies, the lives of the clergy, and the manners of the laity. The visitors had authority to proceed a step further. In flagrant cases a few censures were passed, and a few injunctions given. The idea was to restrain, rather than to abolish, the old system.

Among other things it was thought expedient

* See Jewel's Apology, Burnet's History of the Reformation, Heylin's Ecclesiastical History, &c.

to suspend preaching. Amidst the license of the times, no species of it deserved more reproof than that which had gotten possession of the pulpit. Many of the monks had been secularized; and, bringing with them into their churches their old monastic ideas, the popular divinity of those times was, if possible, more opposite to Scripture, and more offensive to common sense, than it had ever been in the darkest reign of popery. In the room of preaching, a book of homilies was published, and ordered to be read in churches. The use of Scripture also was allowed; and, that the people might have an explanation of it at hand, the commentary of Erasmus was authorized. These changes had great efficacy; moderate as they appeared, and aiming rather to undermine the foundations of popery than to overturn them by any open assault.

The minds of the people indeed were, in a good degree, prepared for them; and it is said, nothing contributed more to loosen their prejudices than a popular paper which was published about the close of the late reign, entitled, "The Supplication of the poor Commons to the King." It was levelled chiefly at the ignorance and immorality of the Romish clergy; and, being written in a masterly manner, and interspersed with a variety of lively anecdotes, it was much read, and tended greatly to give the people just ideas of the clerical office. Among other stories, the following very curious one is related:—A certain court chaplain, who had great

preferment, observed, as he was travelling, a church upon a fair hill, beset with groves and fields, the green meadows lying beneath on the banks of a river garnished with willows, poplars, and alders. He was mightily taken with the place, and calling out to his servant, "Robin," said he, "this benefice standeth pleasantly. I would it were mine." "Why, sir," said his servant, "it is yours;" and immediately named the parish. "If your highness had so many swine in this realm as you have men, would you commit the keeping of them to such swine-herds as did not know their swine-cots when they saw them?"

The dread in which the Romish clergy were at that time thrown, from what had been already done, is strongly expressed in the following language:—"These dumb dogs have learned to fawn upon them who bring them bread, and to be wonderful frisky when they are cherished; but if they be once bid to couch, they draw the tail between their legs, and get them straight to their kennel; and then, come who will, they stir no more till they hear their sire pope cry out, 'Hey, cut, or long tail.' So afraid are they of stripes, and lest they should be tied up so short that they cannot range abroad, nor worry, now and then, a lamb."

Then follows a long account of their rapacity, of which many instances are given. Among others, we are told it was no rare thing to see poor people beg at Easter to pay for the sacrament when they receive it. Nor is it less common to see men beg for dead bodies, that they

may pay the priest's dues. It is not long since, in the city of London, a dead body was brought to the church to be buried ; being so poor that it was almost quite naked. But these charitable men, who teach us that it is one of the works of mercy to bury the dead, would not bury this corpse without their dues. So they caused it to be carried into the street, till the poor people who dwelled there begged so much as the dues came to.

The apostrophe of these suppliants to the king was very noble and spirited :—" If you suffer Christ's poor members to be thus oppressed, expect the righteous judgment of God for your negligence. Be merciful, therefore, to yourself as well as to us. Endanger not your own soul by the suffering of us poor commons. Remember that your hoar hairs are a token that nature maketh haste to absolve your life. Defer not, then, most dread sovereign, the reformation of these enormities ; for the wound is even unto death ; whoredom is more esteemed than wedlock ; simony hath lost its name ; usury is lawful gains. What example of life do the people show this day, which declares us more to be the people of God than Jews and Mohammedans ?"

The leaders of the popish party easily saw the tendency of the primate's measures, and gave them what opposition they were able. The bishop of Winchester never appeared in a more becoming light. With equal firmness and plausibility he remonstrated. The commence-

ment of a minority, he said, was not a time to introduce novelties. To alter the religion of a country was a serious business, and required the utmost deliberation. No act of legislature, he observed, had yet passed; and it was great presumption to publish things under the king's name, with which it was well known neither he nor the protector was at all acquainted. But even if bare decency were consulted, it was very offensive to all sober men to see the wisdom of ages cancelled in a few months. The paraphrase of Erasmus, he remarked, was written at a time when the pen of that writer was very licentious. It contained many points of doctrine which, he presumed, the Protestants themselves would not willingly inculcate; and he would maintain, that it contradicted the homilies in many particulars. As for the homilies, though he did not doubt their being well intended, yet they were certainly very inaccurate compositions, and ran into length on many curious points of doctrine which tended rather to mislead than to inform the people. For himself, he said, he was careless of all consequences which the freedom of his speech might draw upon him. The last scene of his life was now on the stage, and he only wished to conclude it properly.

There was an energy and greatness in this language, superior to any thing that had ever fallen from Gardiner; and if that had been the last scene of his life, we must have acknowledged the dignity of its conclusion. In his

objections, also, there was more than a show of reasoning ; and the promoters of reformation had but an indifferent ground for a defence. They answered with the plainness and simplicity of honest men, (which was the best defence they could make,) that they were assured their amendments were right on the whole ; and that if some things were objectionable, these too should be amended as soon as possible.

This was a better answer, and more in the spirit of reformation, than their replying, as they afterward did, to the arguments of Winchester, by throwing him into prison. This violent measure may well be reckoned among the errors of those times. The archbishop, indeed, does not appear to have had any hand in this affair. It issued solely from the council ; and was intended, probably, to remove Winchester from the parliament, which was then about to be assembled. In every light, political or religious, it was a harsh, discordant measure, and very unworthy of the liberal cause which it was intended to serve.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON the 4th of November, 1547, about nine months after Henry's death, a parliament was assembled ; and the leaders of the Protestant cause hoped to make it the instrument of still more essential alterations than any they had yet

made. Indeed, the bias of the nation leaned more to this side. Such a change appeared in the opinions of men, since the last parliament of Henry, that no one could imagine the two assemblies were composed of the same people. In every debate the Protestants took the lead, and drew over a majority. In that age of novelty, when the general principles of men were unfixed, it was an easy matter to persuade those who were incapable of rational inquiry. The convocation, animated by the archbishop, showed the same spirit, and digested business for the parliament. The act of the Six Articles was repealed; communion in both kinds was allowed; tradition was discredited; Lent was considered as a political institution; the liturgy was ordered to be new-modelled; an easy catechism to be framed; and the canon law to be reformed.

These things, however, were not all done at this time; but I mention them together, as the principal acts of parliament and of convocation, during this short reign.

In framing the catechism, and new-modelling the liturgy and the canon law, the archbishop had the chief hand. The last, indeed, he had attempted in the late reign; but the prevalence of the popish party obliged him to leave that useful work unfinished. He now undertook it in earnest; and not being satisfied with making it an accurate and judicious performance, he endeavoured to make it even elegant. Dr. Haddon was esteemed, at that time,

the best Latinist in England; and the archbishop engaged him to revise the language of his performance. Several of Haddon's corrections may yet be seen in the original manuscript; which is still extant in Bene't College in Cambridge. *Mulierum a partu*, is altered into *Levatarum puerperarum*; and *cuicunque hoc prærogativum est*, into *cuicunque hoc peculiare jus tribuitur, quod prærogativum vocant*. But such was the fatality attending this useful work, that it was prevented taking effect in Edward's, as it had been in Henry's reign: it was not sufficiently prepared to be brought forward before that king's immature death.

The archbishop endeavoured also to confine the office of confirmation, as much as he could, to adults. He saw little use in administering it to children. But when people were come to years of discretion, and seriously desired to renew their baptismal vow, he thought the solemnity of such an ordinance, at that time, might make a strong impression.

Some other changes he made of smaller import; but still with that admirable caution and prudence which marked all his proceedings.

His caution, however, did not pass wholly uncensured. Many of his friends conceived that he might have taken hastier steps. The zeal of Calvin, in particular, took offence. That reformer wrote his sentiments very freely to the archbishop, and wished him to push matters with a little more spirit. He put him in mind of his age, which could not long allow

him to continue his useful labours ; and feared that on his death an opportunity would be lost which might never be recovered. The archbishop answered his letter with great kindness ; reminded him of the many difficulties he had still to oppose ; and endeavoured to convince him of the great imprudence of less cautious measures.

While the primate was thus abolishing the essentials of popery, it may be supposed he did not suffer its pageantry to pass unobserved.

The frequency of processions was become a great abuse. Men began to think nothing was religion but what was an object of sight. This shows how much they have to answer for who introduce needless ceremonies into the offices of any religious establishment. The minds of the people, at the time we are now describing, fascinated with pomp and splendour, saw, with less reluctance, the foundation of popery shaken, than the ostentatious ceremonies abolished, of carrying palms on Palm-Sunday, or ashes on Ash-Wednesday.

Mr. Hume, treating these alterations with levity, attributes them to the morose humour of the reformers ; and insinuates, that it is happy when superstition, which is generally with him another word for religion, takes this inoffensive turn. When Mr. Hume rears the standard of infidelity, and boldly combats the truth of religion, he acts openly and honestly ; but when he scatters his careless insinuations, as he traverses the paths of history, we characterize him as a dark, insidious enemy.

During the debates on these subjects, a very extraordinary phenomenon appeared in the house of lords,—the archbishop of Canterbury, at the head of the popish peers and popish bishops, contending eagerly against the whole force of the Protestant interest. The point in dispute was, the propriety of granting a large parcel of collegiate and chantry lands to the king's use. Had it been intended to employ this grant in any useful work, the archbishop would readily have given his vote for it; but he knew well what direction it would take, and he wished the lands rather to continue as they were, hoping for better times, than have them fall into the hands of rapacious courtiers. He had the mortification, however, to see his opponents prevail.

While this bill was pending in the house, the two universities, which were clearly comprehended in the letter of it, became very apprehensive, and made powerful intercession at court to avert the danger. Whether the primate interested himself in their favour on this occasion does not appear; it is rather probable that he did, as we find him interesting himself for them on many other occasions.

They were, at that time, little more than nurseries of sloth, superstition, and ignorance; and not many degrees raised above the monkish institution which had lately been suppressed.—Many ingenious men, and scholars of great reputation, were among them; but they were yet so thinly scattered in the several colleges, as to

have little influence in forming the general character of the universities ; and they who wished well to these foundations, easily saw this corruption must terminate in their ruin, and desired to avert it. The archbishop always thought himself much interested in the welfare of both the universities, but of Cambridge in particular ; and though he does not appear to have any legal power there, yet such was his interest at court, and such was the general dependance of the more eminent members of that society upon him, that scarcely any thing was donet here, either of a public or a private nature, without consulting him. It was his chief endeavour to encourage, as much as possible, a spirit of inquiry, and to rouse the students from the slumber of their predecessors ; well knowing the *libertas philosophandi* was the great means of detecting error, and that true learning could never be at variance with true religion. Ascham and Cheke, two of the most elegant scholars of that age, were chiefly relied on, and consulted by, the archbishop in this work.

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE the primate was acting this great and good part, and, on all occasions, discovering the utmost mildness and candour, the truth of history calls on us to acknowledge that, on one unhappy occasion, he appeared under a very different character,—that of a bigoted perse-

cutor. It is very true, indeed, that he went not voluntarily into this business, but acted under a commission to inquire into heretical opinions.

When the errors of the Church of Rome were scrutinized, private judgment, although the basis of all liberal inquiry, gave birth, as might naturally be supposed, to a variety of strange enthusiastic opinions. Many of these were, unquestionably, absurd enough, and some of them destructive of moral goodness; as, that the elect could not sin; that although the outward man might transgress, the inward man remained immaculate; that the regenerate have a right to what they want—and some others equally detestable. They were opinions, however, of a less offensive nature that drew upon them the archbishop's severity.

Joan Bocher and George Paris were accused, though at different times; one for denying the humanity of Christ, the other for denying his divinity. They were both tried, and condemned to the stake; and the archbishop not only consented to these acts of blood, but even persuaded the aversion of the young king into a compliance. "Your majesty must distinguish," said he, informing his royal pupil's conscience, "between common opinions, and such as are the essential Articles of Faith. These latter we must, on no account, suffer to be opposed."

Nothing, even plausible, can be suggested in defence of the archbishop on this occasion; except only that the spirit of popery was not yet wholly repressed.

There are, however, among Protestant writers at this day, some who have undertaken his vindication. But I spare their indiscretion. Let the horrid act be universally disclaimed. To palliate is to participate. With indignation let it be recorded, as what, above all other things, has disgraced that religious liberty which our ancestors, in most other respects, so nobly purchased.

From this disagreeable view of the archbishop, let us endeavour to bring ourselves again in temper with him, by viewing him as the friend and patron of the distressed. The suffering professors of Protestantism, who were scattered in great numbers about the various countries of Europe, were always sure of an asylum with him. His palace at Lambeth might be called a seminary of learned men; the greater part of whom persecution had driven from home.—Here, among other celebrated reformers, Martyr, Bucer, Aless, and Phage, found a sanctuary. Martyr, Bucer, and Phage were liberally pensioned by the archbishop till he could otherwise provide for them. It was his wish to fix them in the two universities, where he hoped their great knowledge and spirit of inquiry would forward his designs of restoring learning; and he at length obtained professorships for them all. Bucer and Phage were settled at Cambridge; where they only showed what might have been expected from them, both dying within a few months after their arrival. But at Oxford, Martyr acted a very conspicuous part;

and contributed to introduce among the students there a very liberal mode of thinking.

Aless had been driven from Scotland, his native country, for the novelty of his opinions. The cause in which he suffered, added to his abilities and learning, so far recommended him to the university of Leipsic, to which he retired, that he was chosen a professor there. At this place he became acquainted with Melancthon, who, having written a treatise on some part of the controversy between the papists and Protestants, was desirous of consulting the archbishop on a few points; and engaged Aless, otherwise not averse to the employment, to undertake a voyage into England for that purpose. In the course of the conference, the archbishop was so much taken with his simplicity and learning, that he settled a pension on him, and retained him in his family.

The misfortunes of the times drew Alasco also into England, where the archbishop became an early patron to him; and showed on this occasion, at least, the candour and liberality of his sentiments, by permitting a person, who held many opinions very different from his own, to collect his brethren and such as chose to communicate with him, into a church. At the head of this little assembly, Alasco long presided; exhibiting an eminent example of piety and decency of manners.

Among other learned foreigners, John Sleiden was under particular obligation to the archbishop. Sleiden was, at that time, engaged in

writing the History of the Reformation ; a work from which much was expected, and which the archbishop, by allowing him a pension and opportunities of study, enabled him to prosecute with less difficulty than had attended the beginning of his labours.

Leland, the first British antiquarian, was also among the primate's particular friends. Leland had a wonderful facility in learning languages, and was esteemed the first linguist in Europe. The archbishop soon took notice of him, and, with his usual discernment, recommended him to be the king's librarian. His genius threw him on the study of antiquities, and his opportunities on those of his own country ; the archbishop, in the meantime, by procuring preferment for him, enabled him to make those inquiries to which his countrymen have been so much indebted.

Among others, who were under obligations to the archbishop's generosity, was the amiable Bishop Latimer ; who, not choosing to be reinstated in his old bishopric, and having made but an indifferent provision for his future necessities, spent a great part of his latter life with the archbishop at Lambeth.

Besides this intimacy with learned men at home, the archbishop held a constant correspondence with most of the learned men in Europe.

The great patron of Erasmus had been Archbishop Warham ; than whom, to give popery its due, few churchmen of those times led a

more apostolical life. When Cranmer succeeded Warham, Erasmus was in the decline of age. He found, however, during the short time he lived, as beneficent a friend in the new archbishop as he had lost in the old one.

The primate corresponded also with Oslander, Melancthon, and Calvin. His foreign correspondence, indeed, was so large, that he appointed a person with a salary at Canterbury, whose chief employment was to forward and receive his packets.

Among the most eminent of his correspondents was Herman, archbishop and elector of Cologne. This prelate had been early impressed with the principles of the Reformation by Melancthon, and had used all his influence to introduce them in his electorate. But he met with powerful opposition, the pope and emperor combining against him; the former in his spiritual, the latter in his temporal capacity. So potent a combination crushed him. Terms, indeed, were offered; but he would hearken to no dishonourable compromise. "Nothing," he would say, "can happen to me unexpectedly; I have long since fortified my mind against every event." Instead of a splendid life, therefore, at variance with his opinions, he chose a private station; in which he enjoyed the pleasures of study, the friendship of good men, and the tranquillity of a good conscience.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN the year 1549 the archbishop was engaged in a controversy of a very singular kind, on the following occasion.

The dissolution of monasteries having thrown the landed interest of the nation into new hands, introduced also a new kind of culture, which at first occasioned a scarcity. Mr. Hume, speaking of this matter, with great judgment remarks, that "no abuse in civil society is so great as not to be attended with a variety of beneficial consequences; and, in the beginnings of reformation, the loss of these advantages is always felt very sensibly; while the benefit resulting from the change, is the slow effect of time, and is seldom perceived by the bulk of a nation." Thus, on the present occasion, the bad effects of a new mode of culture were experienced before its advantages took place; and the people expressing dissatisfaction in all parts, in some flamed out into acts of violence. Among other insurrections, one in Devonshire was very formidable. The insurgents felt the effects of famine, but in an age of ignorance they could not trace the cause. The discontented priests, who swarmed about the country, presently assigned one.—"The famine was a judgment for the abolition of the holy Catholic religion; and till that was restored, the people must not look either for seed-time or harvest."

Such language changed riot into enthusiasm. The banner of the cross was reared; and the

insurgents, marking themselves with the five wounds of Christ, called their march "the pilgrimage of grace."

Their first attempt was on Exeter, which they surrounded with their tumultuary forces. The town was reduced to extremity; but still resisted; encouraged chiefly by a brave old townsman, who, bringing all his provision into the street, "Here," cried he, "my fellow-citizens, take what I have among you. For myself, I will fight with one arm, and feed on the other, rather than suffer these ruffians to enter."

As the rebels were thus checked by the firmness of Exeter, they employed this time of inactivity in sending petitions and articles to the king, in which they demanded the ceremonies of the popish worship to be restored, the new liturgy to be abolished, the use of the Bible to be forbidden, and, in short, every thing to be undone that had already been done.

General answers were given to these demands; but the rebels continuing still unsatisfied, Lord Russel was sent against them with a body of forces. He fell on them as they lay before Exeter; and gave them a severe defeat.

But though their spirit was broken, their prejudices continued. The archbishop, therefore, engaged in the humane part of bringing them to reason; hoping that their sufferings had, by this time, abated the ardour of their zeal.

The articles of their petitions relating to religion, which were fifteen in number, the arch-

bishop undertook to answer. The first rough draught of this work, which is of considerable length, is still extant in the library of Bene't College, in Cambridge, and is published by Mr. Strype, in his Appendix to the Life of Archbishop Cranmer. It contains a very extensive compass of learning, and is written with great strength of argument; but its principal recommendation is, its being so admirably adapted to the capacity of those to whom it was addressed. Nothing can show more judgment or knowledge of the manners of the lower people. I shall give the reader a few passages from this very masterly work, as a specimen.

The rebel articles begin with the phrase, "We will have."

"In the first place," says the archbishop, "I dislike your beginning. Is it the fashion of subjects to say to their prince, 'We will have?' Would any of you that be householders be content that your servants should come upon you with harness on their backs, and swords in their hands, and say, 'We will have?'"

"But leaving your rude and unhandsome manner of speech, I will come to the point. You say, you 'will have all the holy decrees to be observed.' But I dare say, very few, or none of you, understand what you ask. Do you know what the holy decrees be? As holy as they may be called, they be indeed so wicked and full of tyranny, that the like were never devised. I shall rehearse some of them, that you may see how holy they be. One decree sayeth,

that 'all the decrees of the bishop of Rome ought to be kept as God's word.' Another, that 'whosoever receiveth not the decrees of the bishop of Rome, his sin shall never be forgiven.' A third, that 'although the bishop of Rome regard neither his own salvation, nor any man's else, but puts down with himself headlong innumerable people, by heaps, into hell; yet may no mortal man presume to reprove him therefor.' I cannot think that you be so far from all godliness as to desire decrees which be so blasphemous to God, and so far from all equity and reason. For I dare say that the subtle papists, when they moved you to stand in this article, that 'all holy decrees should be observed,' never showed you these decrees; for if they had, they knew right well you would never have consented to this article.

"But now let me show you what a miserable case you should bring yourselves into, if the king's majesty should assent unto this first article. For among these decrees, one is, that 'no priest shall be sued before a temporal judge for any manner of cause or crime; but before his bishop only.' Another is, that 'a priest may sue a temporal man, either before a temporal or a spiritual judge, at his pleasure.' I cannot deny but these be good and beneficial decrees for the liberty of the clergy. But I suppose none of you will think it an indifferent decree, that a priest shall sue you where he list; but if he had slain one of your sons or brothers, you could have no remedy against him

but only before the bishop. What mean these papistical priests, think you, that stirred you up to ask such decrees to be observed, but craftily to bring you under their subjection; and that you yourselves ignorantly asking ye wist not what, should put your heads under their girdles?

“Surely, if ye had known these decrees when ye consented to this article, ye would have torn the article in pieces; for by this article ye would have all the ancient laws of the realm to cease, and those decrees come in their room. Or otherwise, by your own article ye would condemn yourselves to be heretics.

“How ye be bewitched by these false papists! Why do ye suffer them to abuse you by their subtlety? Why do ye not send them to the king, like arrant traitors, saying unto him, ‘Most mighty prince, we present here unto you heinous traitors against your majesty, and great deceivers of us your true subjects. We have erred; and by ignorance have been seduced to ask we wist not what. Have pity on our ignorance; and punish these abominable traitors.’

“What was in your minds to ask such a thing as this? and so presumptuously to say, ‘We will have it?’ I trust there be not in you so much malice and devilishness as the article containeth; but that you have been artfully suborned by wicked papists to ask you know not what.

“If you had asked that the word of God might be duly observed and kept in this realm,

all that be godly would have commended you. But as you ask Romish decrees to be observed, there is no godly Englishman that will consent to your article. But, clean contrary, a great number of godly persons within this realm, for the love of God, be daily humble suitors to the king's majesty, that he will weed out of this realm all popish decrees, laws, and canons, and whatsoever else is contrary to God's word. And is any of you so far from reason as to think he will hearken to you, who say, 'We will have Romish laws;' and turn his ear from them who are humble suitors for God's word?"

From these few extracts, which are taken from the archbishop's answer to the first article, the reader may judge in how admirable a way he answered the remaining fourteen. The whole work indeed may be a model to those who wish to make themselves masters of that mode of reasoning which is adapted to the people.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE extensive correspondence abroad in which the archbishop was engaged, and the many applications he received from all parts, put him, at this time, (about the year 1546,) on a scheme which he had greatly at heart,—the union of all the Protestant Churches in Europe.

They were all united against the pretensions of the Church of Rome; but in no other point

were they perfectly harmonious. Their widest differences, however, regarded the sacraments, divine decrees, and church government. On each of these heads they held their several opinions, with obstinacy enough on all sides.

Of these dissensions the papists took the advantage. "Let the Protestants alone," was the cry; "they will soon quarrel with the same acrimony among themselves which they have already shown toward us; and it will presently appear, that there can be no criterion of religion, nor peace to Christendom, but in the bosom of a mother church."

Such sarcastic reflections hurt the archbishop, as he conceived they injured religion. He earnestly wished, therefore, to remove this block of offence, and to give the cause he revered that support which, next to truth, he thought union alone could give it. "How noble would be the coalition," he would say, "if all the members of Protestantism should unite in one mode of church government, and in one confession of faith!"

In the southern parts of France, in Holland, and in Germany, the Reformation flourished chiefly under Calvin, Bullinger, and Melancthon. To these eminent reformers the archbishop applied with much earnestness; entreating them to join their endeavours with his in forwarding this great scheme; and proposed England as a place where they might hold their consultations with the most convenience and the most security. The good archbishop wanted

the experience of later times to convince him how great an impossibility he attempted. He was not aware that when private judgment becomes the criterion, it will show itself of course in different creeds, in different modes of worship, and in different forms of church government; which latter will always take their complexion from the state. How little could be expected from this interview, Melancthon's answer might early have convinced him.— That reformer, in strong language, applauded the primate's intention, and heartily wished it might succeed. "But," added he, "the model you ought to go upon is certainly that confession of faith which we signed at Augsburgh." However liberal that confession might be, there was certainly no liberality in the imposition of it.

Calvin seems to have expected very little from this business. He answers only in general terms. He professes that he would cross ten seas with cheerfulness for the good of Christendom, or of the Church of England alone; but, in the present case, he pleads his inability, and recommends the whole business to the hands of God. This reformer saw deeper into the affair than our good archbishop: he not only saw the impracticability of it; but probably thought, with many other learned men, that if the thing had even been practicable, it was by no means advisable; as different sects would naturally be a check on each other, and might preserve the church of Christ from those impurities which the despotism of the Roman hierar-

chy had unquestionably introduced, and which another despotic hierarchy might introduce again.

During the course of this projected union, a question arose of great importance, and which indeed threw many difficulties in the very vestibule of it. The question was, whether, in drawing up a confession of faith, definite or general terms should be adopted. The primate, with his usual candour, pleaded for the greatest latitude. "Let us leave the portal," said he, "as wide as we can; and exclude none whom it is in our power to comprehend." He was opposed in this argument chiefly by Melancthon; who, though a mild and gentle reformer on most occasions, wrote with too much animosity on this; making up in zeal what he wanted in candour.

Here ended the projected union of the Protestant Churches. The troublesome times which afterward broke out in England put an end to all further thoughts of the design; after the archbishop had laboured in it full two years to no purpose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BUT although the primate's moderation failed of its effect abroad, it had fuller scope among the sectaries at home.

When the Bible was first opened, after men had so long been deprived of it, they were sat-

isfied with reading it simply, and gathering from it the way of life and salvation; overlooking questions of difficulty in the general comfort derived from its promises, and troubling nobody with their particular opinions. This is ever the golden age of religion. But men soon begin to look higher. The vulgar can read their Bibles, and learn their duty: the learned must do something more: they must unravel knotty points; they must broach novel doctrines, which the people must be made to receive, as points of importance; they must contradict and oppose; they must show themselves, in short, to be able champions of religion, and fit to appear at the head of sectaries.

Much of this spirit had already gotten abroad in England; and a variety of causes concurred in stirring it up. Besides the different tenets which began to appear among the English Protestants themselves, disgusted papists artfully threw in their subtleties and distinctions; and a multitude of religionists from Germany, Switzerland, and Holland, led by their pastors, brought over with them multifarious and contradictory creeds. It was then as common for men to migrate for the sake of religion as it is now for the sake of trade. In a word, all this mass, digesting together, began to ferment.

If sectaries (united in leading principles, and differing only in a few indifferent forms or speculative points) would keep their opinions to themselves, their differences, as Calvin seemed to think, might serve the cause of religion, in-

stead of injuring it. But the forwardness of teachers in imposing all their own whimsical dogmas on others, instead of keeping to the great truths of religion, is the grand mischief. It is this which distracts the people ; who, being thus accustomed to hear a different doctrine every day, begin to think of religion itself, which appears so variable an object, with less reverence. Much of this intemperate zeal had at this time possessed the teachers of religion ; and it became very evident, that practical Christianity had lost ground, in proportion as that which is called the science of theology was more studied.

To provide for the peace of the church, in opposition to this growing evil, the council appointed the archbishop to draw up a set of articles. The affair was delicate. The liberty of private judgment being the basis of the late secession from the Church of Rome, every restraint upon it seemed an opposition to the leading principles of the Reformation. A restraint, however, on the clergy seemed to be no breach of liberty : it was only what every church might justly impose. Nothing more, therefore, was intended on this occasion, but to draw such a line as would keep pastors within the pale of their own congregations ; or at least prevent their disturbing the established church.

Among the various opinions which distracted men at this time, besides the tenets of popery, which were yet far from being silenced, were

those concerning justification, faith, good works, free will, and predestination.

The doctrine of supererogation, and the scandalous sale of indulgences, had brought good works into such discredit, that many well-disposed teachers, with a view to oppose this evil the more effectually, laid the chief stress on faith. The Antimonian pastors, refining on this, denied the benefit of any works at all.—This again gave just offence to others; who, to rid themselves of this mischief, ran into the other extreme; and not content with showing the necessity of good works, they inculcated their meritorious and sufficient efficacy.

Again, on the topics of free will and predestination, the same variety of opinions distracted the people. Some teachers left the will at perfect liberty. Others thought it more Scriptural to allow it only free to sin; while good works, they conceived, proceeded merely from the grace of God. Others, again, and in particular a sect styled the “Gospellers,” would admit no qualifying at all in the doctrine of predestination, but resolved all into the absolute decrees of God.

Amidst this variety of doctrine, the archbishop endeavoured to draw up such a set of articles as would best provide for the peace of the church. It was a nice affair; and he thought it prudent, on this occasion, as he had done before on a similar one, to use such moderation, perhaps such well-timed ambiguity, as might give as little offence as possible.

Such was the origin of that celebrated test of orthodoxy, which is now known by the name of "the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England." Those framed by the archbishop, indeed, consisted of forty-two; but in all succeeding settlements of the church, what was now composed on this head was not only made the groundwork, but was, in many parts, almost *verbatim* retained.

In this work it is not known that the archbishop had any coadjutor. It is improbable, however, that a man of his candour and modesty would engage in a work of this kind without many consultations with his friends; and it is commonly supposed that Ridley, bishop of London, was particularly useful to him. Ridley was a man of exemplary piety and learning; and, what was still more necessary in the present work, a man of sound judgment and great moderation.

Whatever imperfections the articles may really have, they have been charged with many which they certainly have not. Of one very great instance of disingenuity I cannot forbear taking notice. It is contained in a celebrated writer on English history, whose acrimony on all occasions in which religion is concerned, I have already remarked. After throwing out many severe things against the spirit of the reformers at this time, he says, in reference to one of the articles which Cranmer composed,—
 "Care is taken to inculcate, not only that no heathen, however virtuous, can escape an end-

less state of the most exquisite misery; but also, that any one who presumes to maintain that a pagan can possibly be saved, is himself exposed to the penalty of eternal perdition.”*

The article alluded to in this passage, he tells us, is the eighteenth. Now the truth of the matter is, that this article has nothing at all to do with the heathen world, either here or hereafter. It does not in any shape even hint at them. The article barely asserts, that no religion can promise salvation to mankind except the Christian, which is so far from damning pagans, that it virtually implies, Christ died for them as well as for us.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOR was this good prelate so entirely engrossed by his cares for the general welfare of the church, as not to pay a close attention to the particular affairs of his own province. He made himself well acquainted with the characters of all the clergy in his district. His visitations were not things of course, but strict scrutinies into the state of ministers and their parishes. In disposing of his benefices he endeavoured, as much as he could, to suit the pastor to his flock. After his death was found among his papers a list of several towns thus endorsed, “Memorandum: these towns to have learned

* Hume's History, 4to., vol. iii, p. 334, first edition.

ministers." In these places, it is probable, he knew the people were more than commonly addicted to popery; or, that they had gotten among them some popish priests of more than ordinary subtlety, who had misled them.

He was very exact also in the residence of the clergy, and granted dispensations with caution. He had a strict eye also on their doctrine. To some he recommended the homilies; and to others, proper topics for their discourses.

He himself also preached often, wherever he visited. In his sermons to the people he was very plain and instructive; insisting chiefly on the essentials of Christianity. In his sermons at court, or on public occasions, he would declaim, with great freedom and spirit, against the reigning vices of the times. His idea, however just, seems to have been, that the lower orders wanted principles more than practice; and the higher, practice more than principles.

Sir Richard Morrison, a gentleman who had been much employed in embassies abroad both under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., gives us this character of the archbishop's sermons, of which he was a frequent auditor: "The subjects of his sermons, for the most part, were, from whence salvation is to be fetched, and on whom the confidence of man ought to lean. They insisted much on doctrines of faith and works; and taught what the fruits of faith were; and what place was to be given to

works. They instructed men in the duties they owed their neighbour; and that every one was our neighbour to whom we might any way do good. They declared what men ought to think of themselves, after they had done all; and, lastly, what promises Christ hath made, and who they are to whom he will make them good. Thus he brought in the true preaching of the gospel, altogether different from the ordinary way of preaching in those days, which was to treat concerning saints, to tell legendary tales of them, and to report miracles wrought for the confirmation of transubstantiation and other popish corruptions. And such a heat of conviction accompanied his sermons, that the people departed from them with minds possessed of a great hatred of sin, and burning with a desire of holiness."

Bishop Burnet also, who had seen the greatest part of a sermon which the archbishop had preached at court on a fast-day, in the year 1549, tells us, that "it is a very plain, impartial discourse; without any show of learning, or conceits of wit. He severely expostulates, in the name of God, with his hearers for their ill lives, their blasphemies, adulteries, mutual hatred, oppression, and contempt of the gospel; and complains of the slackness of government in punishing these sins; by which it became, in some sort, guilty of them." From this account of the archbishop's preaching, it seems, that whatever speculative opinions he might hold, no man could have a juster idea of the

great truths of the gospel, nor of those topics on which its ministers ought chiefly to insist.

Nor did his own diocese alone engross his care. His advice was generally taken in filling up vacant sees in his province. He lived, of course, harmoniously with all his bishops; and was seconded by them in all his schemes of reformation. He recommended nothing more seriously to them than to examine candidates for holy orders with the greatest care; and to follow the apostle's advice in "laying hands suddenly on no man."

It was common at that time, when any see became vacant, for every courtier to be on the watch to procure some rich grant out of its temporalities. The archbishop was as watchful on the other side; and when any scheme of this kind was on foot, he was generally successful in traversing it.

He was commonly consulted also in the choice of Irish bishops. We have many of his recommendations still extant. "The foremost," says he, on an occasion of this kind, "of those I propose, is Mr. Whitebread, of Hadley, whom I take for his good knowledge, special honesty, fervent zeal, and polite wisdom, to be most meet. Next to him, Mr. Richard Turner, who, besides that he is witty and merry withal, (qualities not unbecoming the gravity of a clergyman, if they be discreetly used,) has nothing more at heart than Jesus Christ and his religion; and in lively preaching of the word declareth such diligence, faithfulness, and wisdom, as for the

same deserveth much commendation. 'There is also one Mr. Whitacre, a man both wise and well learned, chaplain to the bishop of Winchester, very meet for that office, if he might be persuaded to take it upon him.'

Nor did the good primate confine his cares even to those of his own country: he extended them to the reformers of all nations,—French, Dutch, Italians, and Spaniards, who had fled to England on account of religion. 'To him they all applied for that assistance which he readily afforded. He was at great pains in forming them into different societies, and in procuring churches and little establishments for them; in which, without any restraint, they chose their own pastors, and united in their own mode of worship.

This kindness was afterward remembered, and, when England became a persecuted country, contributed not a little to procure for its refugees, in many places, that generous treatment which it had once afforded.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER a successful administration, the Protector Somerset, unhappily assuming too much consequence, exposed himself to an envious party, which had long been collecting against him. It was formed under the machinations of the earl of Warwick, afterward duke of

Northumberland; a man totally unprincipled, guided only by his ambition, and equally versed in the arts of attaching a party and supplanting a rival. All the protector's friends, one after another, he drew from him by specious pretences; and when he made his first grand movement in the secession to Ely-house, he had the pleasure to look round the assembly, and see that scarce one man of consequence was absent, except the archbishop of Canterbury.

Him no arts of seduction could allure. He knew Northumberland's bad designs, and Somerset's honest meanings. Each had ambition; but, while that of Somerset was gratified with a few trivial trappings, Northumberland's dark schemes threatened ruin to the empire.

Nor was the primate merely neutral in this affair. He wrote to the seditious chiefs at Ely-house with such a spirit as shook their resolutions, and would have broken the confederacy had it been headed by a less daring leader than the duke of Northumberland. It appears from the primate's letter, that he was more intimately acquainted with those secret springs which governed their motions than they could have wished or supposed.

But, although the primate's remonstrance probably checked Northumberland's designs, as his first manœuvres seem evidently marked with irresolution; yet he gave way only to attack with greater vigour; and, in the end, Somerset, though allied to the crown, shrouded by the affection of his prince, the favour of the people,

and his own innocence, was unable to grapple with the pernicious arts of this subtle rival; and was brought to the scaffold for the foibles and inaccuracies of his life, which were magnified into crimes.

After the duke of Somerset's death, the archbishop had no weight in public affairs. Northumberland was as little the patron of religion as he had hitherto been of public peace; and though he found it convenient to make Protestantism his profession, yet all men knew that neither it, nor any species of religion, had possession of his heart.

The archbishop and he were never on terms. Often would Cecil say, "Your grace must temporize with this man, or we shall do nothing." As often would the primate answer, he would endeavour to do his utmost. But the integrity of his heart generally faltered in the attempt.

It was a difficult matter, indeed, to keep terms with Northumberland. The archbishop had every reason to think him as much his own private enemy as the enemy of the public. The ears of the young king were continually beset with the duke's insinuations; and though Edward was not forward in listening to any stories against the primate, yet enough was said to weaken all the counsels, and defeat all the plans which he proposed.

Among the many mortifications which he met with from Northumberland, it went nearest his heart to see the little care that was taken in filling vacant sees, and other great benefices of

the church. His own recommendations of proper persons had little weight; and he was grieved to find all those low interests prevailing which would of course introduce great indifference among the ministers of religion. It was the constant endeavour of Northumberland to keep the king as little as possible acquainted with business of every kind, and as much out of the way of those who were likely to give him information. Among all the old ministers, none but Cecil had access to the cabinet; Cecil, whose courtly arts carried him to the very limits of sincerity, perhaps rather beyond them. With him the archbishop intrusted a list of such persons as he thought most proper to succeed to any vacancy; and the wary minister, by observing opportunities, obtained preferment for many of them.

The last affair of a public nature in which the archbishop was engaged, during this short reign, was the exclusion of the Princess Mary, in favour of Lady Jane Grey. Friend as he was to the Reformation, he opposed this violent measure with all his might; and pleaded the oath he had taken in favour of the princess. The whole power of Northumberland had no weight with him. The king himself, who had been wrought into a thorough conviction of the utility of excluding his sister, assailed him with every argument that tenderness and affection could suggest. The primate's constancy at length gave way; and he consented to hear the matter explained by the judges of the realm.

The judges of the realm, with great learning, showed him that his late oath could not lawfully bind him. The archbishop modestly professed his ignorance of law, and took a new one; while the friends of his memory wish they had any veil to throw over his conduct in this discreditable affair, which became afterward indeed a source of the deepest affliction to himself.

Northumberland's great plan was now matured. The king, who had thus far been an instrument, became, from this time, an incumbrance; and was laid aside with as little ceremony as if he had been an actor in a drama. Thus at least run the suspicions of history. The king's death was a very sincere affliction to the archbishop, not only as a public calamity, but as a private loss. The archbishop was his godfather, and loved him with a parent's affection; and though his high station would not allow him to take any part in the prince's education, yet Cheke, and all his other tutors, thought themselves in some degree accountable to the archbishop, and used to acquaint him with the progress of their royal pupil. We have a letter from Dr. Cox still preserved, in which he tells the archbishop, in the language of the times, "that the prince discovered great towardness, and all honest qualities; that he should be taken as a singular gift of God; that he read Cato, Vives, and Æsop; and that he conned very pleasantly."

Erasmus's character of him is rather curious.

Erasmus seems to have known little more than that he was a very modest boy. But as he was a king likewise, the panegyrist thought it proper to clothe his sentiment (for he had but one) in great pomp and variety of expression: *Senex, juvenis convictu, facius sum melior, ac sobrietatem, temperantiam, verecundiam, linguæ moderationem, modestiam, pudicitiam, integritatem, quam juvenis a sene discere debuerat, a juvene senex didici.*"

CHAPTER XXI.

AFTER the death of Edward, which happened in the summer of the year 1553, we find the archbishop engaged in all the irresolute measures succeeding that period, till the settlement of Mary. With the commencement of her reign his troubles began.

When he observed the turn which affairs were likely to take, one of the first things he did was to order his steward to pay every farthing that he owed; saying, "In a short time perhaps we may not be able." When the accounts and receipts were brought to him, "I thank God," said he, "I am now mine own man; and with God's help am able to answer all the world, and all worldly adversities."

He was first assaulted, as is usual, by calumny and invective. A thousand stories were propagated, which were founded commonly on some little known circumstance or occurrence; and half the story being true, gave a degree of

credit to the other half, which was false. Many of these reports he suffered to die away unnoticed, leaving his life and actions to confute them. But one, which concerned the interests of religion, he thought it proper to obviate in a public manner. The affair was this:—

Mass, it seems, had been said in the cathedral church of Canterbury, by some zealous priest, immediately on the change of government; and the report ran, that it had been done by the archbishop's order; as, indeed, before any thing was legally altered, it could not well be supposed otherwise. Many people believed it who were much hurt with it; and the primate was surprised to find with what malicious expedition a story, so wholly opposite to the character he had ever maintained, could circulate not only among his enemies, but among his friends.

He determined, therefore, to stop it; and immediately drew up and published a declaration, in which he expressed his abhorrence of the mass, as a species of idolatry, and professed his entire approbation of all the changes that had been made in the last reign. This paper was considered, by the advocates for Reformation, as an instance of true Christian fortitude, well becoming the first Protestant ecclesiastic. By wordly men it was looked on as a piece of indiscreet and intemperate zeal.*

* "It was by his own indiscreet zeal that he brought on himself the first violence and persecution."—Hume's reign of Mary, chap. i.

It was, however, more than the temper of the government could bear. The archbishop was called before the star-chamber, severely questioned, and thrown into the tower. The objected crime was treason ; but his late bold declaration had, at least, precipitated the measure. The parliament made no difficulty in attainting him ; and indeed his compliance in the affair of Lady Jane was a very justifiable foundation for an attainder.

This was a measure which was little expected by the archbishop, and touched him nearer than any thing could have done. If he had suffered for his doctrines, he might have had the comfort of a good conscience ; but to suffer as an evildoer was a mortification he could not bear.

It was true, indeed, that the queen had pardoned many who were more concerned in the late settlement of the crown in favour of Lady Jane than he had been. Few indeed, who were at all obnoxious, could be less so ; and his services to Mary, in the time of her father, which were frequent and disinterested, deserved surely a grateful remembrance. But his remonstrances, though couched in the humblest and most penitent language, had, for some time, no effect. At length, however, he obtained his pardon ; most probably because it was more agreeable to the genius of the government that he should suffer for heresy than for treason. On the former pretence he was still confined.

He might, however, have avoided question either on one account or the other, if he could

have prevailed with himself to leave the kingdom, as many churchmen had done. Even after his imprisonment, he might probably have found the means of an escape. Some indeed imagined it was what his greatest enemies desired, as the easiest means of getting the disposal of the see of Canterbury. But, from the beginning, he never would think of flight; and all the persuasions and tears of his friends were ineffectual. "Had I been in any other station," he would say, "except this, in which Providence hath placed me, I should certainly have fled. I approve the flight of others. If we are persecuted in one city, we are authorized to fly to another. But I am the only person in the kingdom who cannot do it with decency. I have had the principal hand in all the changes of the last reign; and I cannot, without great impropriety, avoid appearing in their defence."

The gloomy temper of the government, in the meanwhile, became wholly apparent. So much violence attended every proceeding in which religion was concerned, that it was easy to foresee no measures, either of charity or of decency, would be observed. The queen delighted in being called "a virgin sent from heaven to revenge the cause of God." Under such a title nothing but bigotry, superstition, and all their dire effects, could be expected.

How well Gardiner, who was her chief minister, was qualified to correct the sternness of her temper, may be conceived from an anecdote still preserved among the gross improprieties of

those times. His almoner going one day to the Fleet-prison, then full of Protestants, with a basket of bread from the bishop, forbade the keeper, at his peril, to give one morsel of it to any of the heretics. "If you do," added he, "my lord will certainly do you some shrewd turn."

Rigorous, however, as Mary was in the affairs of religion, in state matters she was lenient enough. No blood was shed, but of those whose offences placed them clearly beyond mercy.

The duke of Northumberland was the first victim, than whom no man ever suffered more unlamented.

The archbishop had the satisfaction to hear that his friend, Sir Thomas Palmer, died in the Protestant faith; though he had been persuaded, with other state-prisoners, to hear mass.

Palmer was one of the best bred men of the age in which he lived. To his accomplishments, both natural and acquired, he had added the advantages of foreign travel; which was rare in those days. His youth had been spent with too much license, and he had been greatly misled by the insidious arts of Northumberland; but in other respects he was well esteemed; and in his latter life especially seems to have added the virtues of a Christian to the accomplishments of a gentleman. "I have learned more," said he, as he stood on the scaffold, "in a dark corner of the tower, than in travelling round Europe." Then walking up to the axe, stained with the blood of Northumberland, who

had just suffered, "I thank God;" said he, "I am not afraid to die."

CHAPTER XXII.

WHILE this scene of blood was acting, the archbishop continued in the tower still unmolested. The lenity of the government toward him was matter of general surprise; as the public commonly supposed he would have been the first victim. But many things remained yet to be adjusted. The great point, however, was to give a triumph to popery in a public disputation.

In the year 1553 a convocation met at St. Paul's, by the queen's order, to settle the doctrine of the real presence, by a fair and candid disquisition. Weston, dean of Westminster, was chosen prolocutor. A few articles were proposed for subscription, and the disputation was adjourned to Oxford; where it was intended that the three bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, should enter the lists with a select body of popish disputants.

These fellow-sufferers were all that time confined together in a small apartment in the tower. Their straitened accommodations, however, were amply made up to them by the comfort of each other's company. They carried their Bibles with them, and on these they employed their

prison hours, fortifying their faith, and extracting topics of consolation. These are the scenes in which we are to look for the triumphs of religion. Where its great principles are firmly rooted in the heart, human joys, and human griefs, and human fears, are trivial things.

The convocation had been adjourned to the end of the year 1553; but the several members of it did not meet at Oxford till the following April. There also, at the same time, the three bishops were carried by the Lord Williams of Thame.

From their treatment on this occasion, it was easy to foresee what measures they were likely to expect. They had hitherto been confined, it is true, in a very narrow compass; but as the tower was then crowded with prisoners, better accommodations could not well be allowed. In other respects, however, they had received marks of attention. What they wanted had been readily furnished, and their own servants were suffered to attend them.

But as soon as this new measure took place, they experienced a different treatment. The little baggage they had was stopped; their servants were discharged; they were conducted to Oxford with ignominy, and were thrown into the common jail.

The time appointed for the grand disputation at length arrived. Delegates from both universities joined the members of convocation; and the whole body, to the number of thirty-three, assembled at St. Mary's church. There, being

dressed in their academical robes, they seated themselves in great state around the high altar, and the archbishop was sent for. He was brought into the church by the mayor and bailiffs, under the guard of a company of billmen. They who had known him in his better days, saw him now greatly changed. Instead of that glow of health upon his cheek, that brisk and active step which showed the vigour of his constitution, he was now become, through ill-usage and confinement, a pale, enfeebled old man. Clad in a plain habit, with a staff in his hand, he came forward, through an opening in the crowd, paying the prolocutor and his assessors great respect. They offered him a seat, but he declined it.

The prolocutor then addressed him on the happiness of religious unity; and told him, the intention of the present meeting was to draw him, if possible, again to the church. "These articles," said he, holding out a paper, "were agreed on by convocation, which, we hope, you will have no objection to subscribe."

The archbishop, receiving the paper, joined the prolocutor in a most ardent wish for Christian unity, when it could be obtained, he said, with a good conscience.

Having read the articles, which contained the doctrine of the real presence, drawn up according to the determination of the Church of Rome, he shook his head, and said he feared that paper would not afford a sufficient foundation for the religious unity which all so much desired.

He offered, however, if the paper were left in his hands, to give a fuller answer to it by the next morning. This was permitted. At the same time, it was agreed, that each point of difference should afterward be the subject of a regular disputation.

On the next day, which was Sunday, the archbishop declared in writing his sense of the articles; and the Monday following was appointed to discuss the questions on which the two parties differed.

I mean not, however, here to enter into a detail of this disputation, which was carried into great length; and at this day would be tedious, uninteresting, and uninformative. Neither Archbishop Cranmer, nor Bishop Ridley, I think, acted with so much propriety on this occasion as Bishop Latimer. The papists, it seems, pushed them with the authority of the fathers; some of whom talk of the sacrament of the Lord's supper in a language, to speak slightly of it, uncommonly figurative. Cranmer and Ridley, not caring to deny so respectable an authority, seem to have been at a loss how to evade it; while Latimer, with more Christian simplicity, rid himself of the difficulty at once: "I lay no stress on the fathers," said he, "except when they lay a stress on Scripture."

At the close of the disputation the archbishop complained greatly of the shortness of the time allowed for discussing a subject of such importance; and wished also that he might be allowed to oppose, as well as to answer; which

was absolutely necessary, he said, in a fair discussion of a question. But he was not heard on either of these points; from which, he observed, it evidently appeared that nothing less was intended than a fair investigation of truth.

But in whatever light the arguments of these Protestant bishops may appear at this day, their Christian fortitude will ever be admired. In their own times it was thought matter of great rejoicing and Christian triumph. Soon after the disputation was over, the three bishops received the following spirited letter from Dr. Taylor, in the name of all their suffering brethren:—

“RIGHT REVEREND FATHERS IN THE LORD,
—I wish you to enjoy continually God’s grace and peace through Jesus Christ. And God be praised for this your most excellent promotion, which ye are called unto at present; that is, that ye are counted worthy to be allowed among the number of Christ’s records and witnesses. England hath had but a very few learned bishops that would stick to Christ *ad ignem*. Once, again, I thank God heartily in Christ for your most happy onset, most valiant proceeding, most constant suffering of all such infamies, hissings, clappings, taunts, open rebukes, loss of living and liberty, for the defence of God’s cause, truth, and glory. I cannot utter with pen how I rejoice in my heart for you three such captains in the foreward, under Christ’s cross, in such a skirmish, when not only one

or two of our dear Redeemer's strongholds are besieged, but all his chief castles, ordained for our safeguard, are traitorously impugned. This your enterprise, in the sight of all that be in heaven, and of all God's people on earth, is most pleasant to behold. This is another sort of nobility, than to be in the forefront in wordly warfares. For God's sake, pray for us; for we fail not daily to pray for you. We are stronger and stronger in the Lord; his name be praised! And we doubt not but ye be so in Christ's own sweet school. Heaven is all, and wholly of our side. Therefore *gaudete in Domino semper; et iterum gaudete, et exultate*. Your assured in Christ,

ROWLAND TAYLOR."

On the 26th of April, 1554, the archbishop was condemned. From that time a more rigorous treatment than he had yet experienced took place. It is said, he was scarcely allowed the necessaries of life; though it is probable such accounts may be exaggerated. His wants, however, could not be well answered, if we may judge from an anecdote still preserved, which informs us that he received with great thankfulness a small supply of linen, sent him privately by a friend in London.

On the 11th of November following, a new parliament met; which the Protestants of those times supposed was made pliant by Spanish gold. But there is no occasion for the surmise; parliaments in those days had little idea of opposing the inclinations of the court.

By this parliament the pope's legate was invited into England; and on his arrival, the nation was reconciled in form to the holy see; the legate absolving all the perjuries, schisms, and heresies, of which the parliament and the convocation had been guilty.

After this, religious affairs were modelled. The Latin service was restored, the use of the Scriptures abrogated, and the popish priests appeared in public with that consequence which the government allowed. Bishop Ridley, characterizing the times, says, *Papismus apud nos ubique in pleno suo antiquo robore regnat.*

Among other instances of popish zeal, the archbishop was informed, that his book on the sacrament had been publicly burned. "Ah!" said he, "they have honoured it more than it deserved: I hear they burned it with the New Testament." And indeed this was the fact; for they burned at the same time the late translation of the Testament, on the pretence that it was spurious.

The convocation, in the meantime, petitioned for a revival of the sanguinary laws. They had already been anticipated; and several Protestants had been put to death without any colour of justice; and when a member of the convocation, with more candour than his brethren, observed, that the proceedings against these people could not be justified, "Why then," said the prolocutor, tauntingly, "let their friends sue for redress." This parliament, however, put

things on a different establishment; and the favourers of persecution were now allowed legally to follow their inclinations.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHILE the Protestant sufferers were lingering in various prisons, a very unseasonable dispute got footing among some of the warmest of them, on the arduous subject of free will and predestination. It was carried on with such animosity, that confessions were drawn up on both sides, and signed by numbers, who were at that time even under sentence of death. Each party clamoured loud, that their antagonists were likely to do more harm in the Christian world than the papists themselves; inasmuch as their opinions were as bad, and their example not much better. Nay, to such a height of frenzy did their contentions run, that the keeper of the Marshalsea was often obliged to separate them.

During the course of this ill-timed controversy, the archbishop was applied to for his countenance by the predestinarians, to whose tenets he was thought most inclined. But the prudent primate discountenanced both parties, as much as he could; considering, no doubt, such controversies to be especially ill judged among dying men.

Nor were the endeavours of others wanting

to calm the rage of this offensive zeal. Many of their more moderate brethren endeavoured to set before them the impropriety of their behaviour: and one of them put the matter in a very strong light: "There should be no more bitterness," said he, "in a Christian controversy, than in a love-letter." Philpot, afterward an eminent martyr, wrote a very pathetic dissuasive to them on this subject; exhorting them "to meet each other with the kiss of charity; to reach out cheerfully the hand of peace; to take up their cross together, and ascend Mount Calvary with hearts full of benevolence."

I give a detail of this strange dispute, both as a curious anecdote of human nature, and as a very instructive lesson. If a speculative opinion could fasten with so much violence, and produce so much animosity, in the minds of pious men suffering together in one common cause, and even in the article, as it were, of death; how cautious ought they to be on polemical subjects who have perhaps less piety, who live at their ease, and are not tied by any of these strong obligations to forbearance!

While the English Protestants were thus suffering at home, such of them as had the good fortune to escape abroad enjoyed more repose. Among the Lutherans, indeed, they met with some unkind treatment. Their liberal tenets, with regard to the Lord's supper, were very disgusting to those reformers who still maintained the doctrine of transubstantiation. The leaders, however, of the Lutheran churches,

particularly Melancthon, who was a man of candour and moderation, brought their hearers to a better temper; and instructed the populace at Wesel and Frankfort, where this inhospitable disposition chiefly appeared, that, although the English exiles might differ from them in a few points, they were, however, embarked with them in the same common cause of religious liberty, and ought certainly to be treated as brethren.

At Basil John Fox designed, and almost finished, his "Acts and Monuments of the Church." The industry of this man is astonishing. He was principal corrector to one of the greatest printing houses in Europe—that of Operin, at Basil. But notwithstanding his daily employment he found leisure to carry on this vast work; and, what is still more, though he was not able to keep a servant to do his menial offices, the whole was transcribed with his own hand. From a work of this kind we are not led to expect any elegance; yet they who have examined this writer with most accuracy have acknowledged, that although his zeal may have led him into some exaggerated accounts where he relies only on hearsay, yet in all matters where he appeals to authority or record, he may be fully depended on.

At Strasburgh Bishop Jewel laid the plan of his excellent "Apology for the Church of England;" though he did not finish it till happier times; a work, in which its many admirers found it hard to say whether candour and hu-

manity, or sense, learning, and a well-tempered zeal for religion, were more conspicuous.

Here, too, William Turner, physician to the Protector Somerset, published a work entitled, "A Dispensatory of Spiritual Physic." It was levelled against the papists, and was written with a sarcastic vein of humour. Such sallies of wit and ridicule, though rather below the dignity of suffering religion, served, however, to divert the universal melancholy which reigned at that time. Turner published also another work of the same kind, which he called "The Hunting of the Romish Fox."

The celebrated Scotch reformer, John Knox, published also at this time an exhortation to the people of England, suited to their calamitous state. It abounds more with enthusiasm than manly sense. Knox had thus early put in his pretensions to a prophetic spirit, which flowed afterward in more plentiful effusions from him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FULL year had now elapsed since the archbishop's disputation at Oxford and condemnation for heresy. During this interval the spirit of persecution, with a fiery sword in one hand and a cross in the other, was let loose in all its terrors. The progress, however, of this violent reign marks only the Almighty's ordinary mode

of providence. When the Christian religion was first preached, the malice of its enemies immediately arose, as if to try and prove it, and seal its truth by the blood of its martyrs. And now when religion was restored, after so long an age of darkness, the providence of God seemed to direct in the same manner that it should be purified and proved by persecution.

Among the numbers, at this time, who died for their religion, were the bishops of London and Worcester; who were delivered over to the secular arm under a commission from Pole, the cardinal-legate.

As they were carried to the stake, they passed under the window of the prison in which the archbishop was confined, and looked up for a parting view. The archbishop was engaged at that time in a conference with a Spanish friar; but, hearing a tumult in the street, he came to the window. They were not yet out of sight. He just lifted up his eyes and hands, and sent after the venerable sufferers a fervent ejaculation for God's assistance in this last great trial.

More ceremony, however, was thought necessary in the primate's case, than had been used in theirs. Pole's authority was not sufficient. A commission, therefore, was sent for to Rome.

In virtue of this commission, the archbishop was convened before the bishop of Gloucester, to whom it was delegated, on the 12th of September, 1555. His books and opinions, his marriage and invasion of the privileges of the

sovereign pontiff, were all summarily recapitulated; and he was cited to appear at Rome in eighty days, and answer for himself. As he did not appear in that time, he was declared contumacious; and a commission was despatched to England, to degrade and deliver him over to the secular arm.

Many of our historians exclaim loudly at the absurdity of declaring him contumacious for not appearing at Rome, when it was well known that, during the whole time, he was detained a prisoner at Oxford. And, no doubt, the thing bears the face of absurdity. But it would be endless to censure and deride all the formalities of law, which are pertinaciously retained in every country, after the real use hath expired.

The ceremony of his degradation was performed by Thirlby, bishop of Ely.

Thirlby, in Cranmer's better days, had been honoured with his particular friendship, and owed him many obligations. Besides those of greater value, in the way of preferment, "there was nothing he was master of," we are informed, "which was not at Thirlby's command. Jewel, plate, instrument, map, horse, or any thing else, though a present from the king, if his friend once took a fancy to it, the generous archbishop would immediately give it him. And though many times the doctor, for civility's sake, would instantly refuse it, yet Cranmer would send it him the next day by a special message. Inso-much that it grew into a proverb, that Dr. Thirlby's commendation of any thing to my

lord of Canterbury, was a plain winning or obtaining it."

As this man, therefore, had long been so much attached to the archbishop, it was thought proper, by his new friends, that he should give an extraordinary test of his zeal. For this reason the ceremony of the degradation was committed to him. He had undertaken, however, too hard a task. The mild benevolence of the primate, which shone forth with great dignity, though he stood dressed in all the mock pageantry of canvass robes, struck the old apostate to the heart. All the past came throbbing into his breast; and a few repentant drops began to trickle down the furrows of his aged cheek. The archbishop gently exhorted him not to suffer his private affections to overpower his public. At length, one by one, the canvass trappings were taken off, amidst the taunts and exultations of Bonner, bishop of London, who was present at the ceremony. The archbishop made some hesitation when they took his crozier out of his hands; and appealed, as others had done, to the next general council.

Thus degraded, he was attired in a plain frieze gown, the common habit of a yeoman at that time; and had what was then called a "townsman's cap" put on his head. In this garb he was carried back to prison; Bonner crying after him, "He is now no longer my lord! He is now no longer my lord!"

Full of that indignation which public wrongs, not private, inspired, he wrote a letter from his

prison to the queen; in which he expostulated with her for sinking the dignity of the crown of England to such a degree, as to have recourse to foreigners for justice on her own subjects. He showed her, with great force of reason, the many inconveniences which arose from thus submitting to a foreign yoke; and opened the designs of the clergy, who had introduced, he told her, this slavery again, with the sole view of establishing themselves in their ancient independent state. He put her in mind also of the oath she had taken to her own kingdom, and of the oath which she had taken to the pope; and begged her to consider whether there was not some contradiction between them. He concluded with telling her that he thought it his duty to enter his protest against the destructive measures which her government was then pursuing.

This letter was carried to the queen by the bailiffs of Oxford. She immediately put it into the hands of Cardinal Pole; with whom she seems, on all occasions, to have left the disposal of her conscience. Pole, in a letter, dated from St. James's, November 6th, 1555, answered it at full length. His very elaborate discourse on this occasion makes the eighty-ninth article of Mr. Strype's appendix.

From the time of Cranmer's degradation, the behaviour of the popish party toward him was totally changed. Every one who now approached him put on an air of civility and respect. Elegant entertainments were made

for him. He was invited frequently by the dean of Christ church to parties at bowls, an exercise of which he had always been fond; and no liberty or indulgence which he could desire was denied. In the midst of these amusements he was given to understand that the queen was greatly disposed to save him; but that she had often been heard to say, she would either have Cranmer a Catholic, or no Cranmer at all; that, in short, they were authorized in assuring him, that if he would only conform to the present changes in religion, he might, if he pleased, assume his former dignity, or, if he declined that, he might enjoy a liberal pension in retirement.

Among all the instances of diabolical cruelty, we scarce find a greater than this. The whole rage of the popish party seemed to be centred against this upright man. His soul they had damned; his body they were determined to burn; and, to complete their triumph, they wanted only to blast his reputation. With this view, these wicked arts were put in practice against him; which succeeded, alas! too well. Cranmer, who was sufficiently armed against the utmost rage and malice of his open enemies, was drawn aside by the delusions of his false friends. After the confinement of a full year within the melancholy walls of a gloomy prison, this sudden return into social commerce dissipated the firm resolves of his soul. A love of life, which he had now well mastered, began insensibly to grow upon him. A paper was

offered him, importing his assent to the tenets of popery; and in an evil hour his better resolutions giving way, he signed the fatal snare.

CHAPTER XXV.

CRANMER'S recantation was received by the popish party with joy beyond expression. It was immediately printed and published; and their cruel work wanting now only its last finishing stroke, a warrant was expedited for his execution, as soon as possible, while he himself was yet kept ignorant of their purpose.

Some writers say, that the recantation was published unfairly; and a modern attempt has been made to invalidate that recantation which the papists sent abroad.*

But even on a supposition that this had been the case, as, in some degree, it probably might, yet a very poor defence can be established on this ground. Cranmer certainly subscribed his assent to the tenets of popery in general terms; and unless the zeal of his friends could rid his memory of that stain, it is of little consequence to say, he did not subscribe them in the detail. A much better apology may be grounded on the weakness of human nature. They who look into themselves must pity him, and wish to throw over him the skirts of that tender veil

* See Whiston's inquiry into the evidence of Archbishop Cranmer's recantation.

with which the great Friend of mankind once screened the infirmities of the well-intentioned: "the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak."

But no apology could vindicate him to himself. In his own judgment, he was fully convicted. Instead of that joy which gives serenity to the dying martyr, his breast was a devoted prey to contrition and wo. A rescued life afforded him no comfort. He had never, till now, felt the power of his enemies. Stung with remorse and horror at what he had done, he consumed his days and nights in anguish. "I have denied the faith: I have pierced myself through with many sorrows;" were the melancholy notes which took possession of his mind, and rang in his ears a constant alarm. Then would recur, in a full tide of compunction, the aggravating thoughts, that he, who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing in the true faith, should be among those who had deserted it; that he, who had been so long the leader of others, should now set them so dreadful an example; and that he, who had always been looked up to with respect, should at length be lost and abandoned among the herd of apostates!

Overwhelmed with grief and perplexity, whichever way he turned his eyes, he saw no ray of comfort left. To persevere in his recantation, was an insupportable thought: to retract it, was scarce possible. His paper was abroad in the world; and he himself was in the hands of men who could easily prevent his pub-

lishing or speaking any thing to counter it, if they should suspect he had such an intention.

He had yet received no intimation of his death, though it was now the 20th of March; and by the purport of the warrant, he was to be executed the next day.

That evening Dr. Cole, one of the heads of the popish party, came to him; and from the insidious and ambiguous discourse of this person, he had the first intimation, though yet no direct one, of what his enemies intended.

After Cole had left him, he spent the remaining part of the evening in drawing up a repentant speech, together with a full confession of his apostasy, resolving to take the best opportunity to speak or publish it; which he supposed indeed the stake would first give him. But, beyond his expectation, a better was afforded.

It was intended that he should be carried immediately from prison to the stake; where a sermon was to be preached. But the morning of the appointed day being wet and stormy, the ceremony was performed under cover.

About nine o'clock the Lord Williams of Thame, attended by the magistrates of Oxford, received him at the prison-gate, and conveyed him to St. Mary's church; where he found a crowded audience waiting for him. He was conducted to an elevated place, in public view, opposite to the pulpit.

He had scarce time to reflect a moment on the dreadful scene which he saw preparing for

him, when the vice-chancellor, and heads of houses, with a numerous train of doctors and professors, entered the church. Among them was Dr. Cole, who, paying his respects to the vice-chancellor, ascended the pulpit.

Cole was a man of abilities; and was considered, according to the mode of those times, as an elegant scholar. His discourse, indeed, seems to have been an excellent piece of oratory.

After a proper preface, he showed the reasons why it was thought necessary to put the unhappy person before them to death, notwithstanding his recantation. On this head he dwelt largely, and said full as much as so bad a cause could be supposed to bear. Then turning to his audience, he very pathetically exhorted them to fear God, and tremble; taking occasion, from the example before their eyes, to remind them of the instability of all human things, and of the great duty of "holding fast their profession without wavering." "This venerable man," said he, "once a peer, a privy-counsellor, an archbishop, and the second person in the realm, renounced his faith, and is now fallen below the lowest."

He addressed himself last to the degraded primate himself. He condoled with him in his present calamitous circumstances; and exhorted him to support with fortitude his last worldly trial.

Cranmer's behaviour, during this discourse, cannot be better described than in the words of

a person present; who, though a papist, seems to have been a very impartial spectator.*

"It is doleful," says he, "to describe his behaviour; his sorrowful countenance; his heavy cheer; his face bedewed with tears; sometimes lifting up his eyes to heaven in hope; sometimes casting them down to the earth for shame. To be brief, he was an image of sorrow. The dolor of his heart burst out continually at his eyes in gushes of tears: yet he retained ever a quiet and grave behaviour; which increased the pity in men's hearts, who unfeignedly loved him, hoping it had been his repentance for his transgressions."

The preacher, having concluded his sermon, turned round to the whole audience; and, with an air of great dignity, desired all who were present to join with him in silent prayers for the unhappy man before them.

A solemn stillness ensued. Every eye and every hand were instantly lifted up to heaven.

Some minutes having been spent in this affecting manner, the degraded primate, who had fallen also on his knees, arose in all the dignity of sorrow, and thus addressed his audience:—

"I had myself intended to have desired your prayers. My desires have been anticipated; and I return you, all that a dying man can give, my sincerest thanks. To your prayers for me, let me add my own."

* The letter from which most of the following account is taken, was found among Fox's MSS., and is taken notice of by Strype.

He then, with great fervour of devotion, broke out into this pathetic exclamation:—

“O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner. I, who have offended heaven and earth more grievously than tongue can express, whither shall I fly for succour? On earth all refuge fails me. Toward heaven I am ashamed to lift my eyes. What shall I then do? Shall I despair? God forbid! O good God! thou art merciful, and refuseth none who come unto thee for succour. To thee, therefore, I fly. Before thee I humble myself. My sins are great. Have mercy upon me! O blessed Redeemer, who assumed not a mortal shape for small offences, who died not to atone for venial sins, accept a penitent heart, though stained with the foulest offences! Have mercy upon me, O God! whose property is always to have mercy. My sins are great: but thy mercy is still greater. O Lord, for Christ's sake hear me! Hear me, most gracious God!”

While he thus prayed, the people spontaneously caught the fervour; and joined audibly with him. The whole scene was highly solemn and affecting.

Having concluded his prayer, he rose from his knees, and, taking a paper from his bosom, continued his speech to this effect:—

“It is now, my brethren, no time to dissemble. I stand upon the verge of life; a vast eternity is before me. What my fears are, or what my hopes, it matters not here to unfold. For one action of my life, at least, I am

accountable to the world,—my late shameful subscription to opinions which are wholly opposite to my real sentiments. Before this congregation I solemnly declare, that the fear of death alone induced me to this ignominious action; that it hath cost me many bitter tears; that in my heart I totally reject the pope, and doctrines of the Church of Rome; and that”—

As he was continuing his speech, the whole assembly was in an uproar. Lord Williams gave the first impulse to the tumult, crying aloud, “Stop the audacious heretic!” On which several priests and friars, rushing from different parts of the church, with great eagerness seized him, pulled him from his seat, dragged him into the street, and, with much indecent precipitation, hurried him to the stake, which was already prepared. Executioners were on the spot, who, securing him with a chain, piled the fagots in order round him.

As he stood thus, with all the horrid apparatus of death about him, amidst taunts, revilings, and execrations, he alone maintained a dispassionate behaviour. Having now discharged his conscience, his mind grew lighter; and he seemed to feel, even in these circumstances, an inward satisfaction, to which he had long been a stranger. His countenance was not fixed, as before, in abject sorrow, on the ground: he looked round him with eyes full of sweetness and benignity, as if at peace with all the world.

A torch being put to the pile, he was pre-

sently involved in a burst of smoke and crackling flame; but on the side next the wind he was distinctly seen, before the fire reached him, to thrust his right hand into it, and to hold it there with astonishing firmness; crying out, "This hand hath offended! This hand hath offended!" When we see human nature struggling so nobly with such uncommon sufferings, it is a pleasing reflection, that through the assistance of God, there is a firmness in the mind of man which will support him under trials, in appearance, beyond his strength.

His sufferings were soon over. The fire rising intensely round him, and a thick smoke involving him, it was supposed he was presently dead. "His patience in his torment," says the author of the letter I have just quoted, "and his courage in dying, if it had been in testimony of the truth, as it was of falsehood, I should worthily have commended; and have matched it with the fame of any father of ancient time. Surely his death grieved every one. Some pitied his body tormented by the fire; others pitied his soul, lost without redemption for ever. His friends sorrowed for love; his enemies, for pity; and strangers, through humanity."

The story of his heart's remaining unconsumed in the midst of the fire, seems to be an instance of that credulous zeal which we have often seen lighted at the flames of dying martyrs.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SUCH was the end of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, after he had presided over the Church of England above twenty years.

In whatever point of light we view this extraordinary man, he is equally the object of our admiration.

His industry and attention were astonishing. When we consider him as a scholar, his learning was so profound, and the treatises which he wrote were so numerous, that we cannot conceive he had any time for business. And yet, when we consider the various scenes of active life in which he was engaged,—in the council, in the convocation, in the parliament, in his diocess, and even in his own house, where he had a constant resort of learned men, or suitors,—we are surprised how he procured time for study.

He never, indeed, could have gone through his daily employments, had he not been the best economist of his time.

He rose commonly at five o'clock, and continued in his study till nine. These early hours, he would say, were the only hours he could call his own. After breakfast he generally spent the remainder of the morning either in public or private business. His chapel-hour was eleven, and his dinner-hour twelve. After

dinner he spent an hour either in conversation with his friends, in playing at chess, or in, what he liked better, overlooking a chess-board. He then retired again to his study, till his chapel-bell rang at five. After prayers he generally walked till six, which was in those times the hour of supper. His evening meal was sparing. Often he ate nothing; and when that was the case, it was his usual custom, as he sat down to table, to draw on a pair of gloves; which was as much as to say, that his hands had nothing to do. After supper, he spent an hour in walking, and another in his study, retiring to his bed-chamber about nine.

This was his usual mode of living when he was most vacant; but very often his afternoons, as well as his mornings, were engaged in business. To this his chess-hour after dinner was commonly first assigned, and the remainder of the afternoon, as the occasion required. He generally, however, contrived, if possible, even in the busiest day, to devote some proportion of his time to his books besides the morning. And Mr. Fox tells us, he always accustomed himself to read and write in a standing posture; esteeming constant sitting very pernicious to a studious man.

His learning was chiefly confined to his profession. He had applied himself in Cambridge to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages; which, though he esteemed at that time as the mark of heresy, appeared to him the only sources of attaining a critical knowledge

of the Scriptures. He had so accurately studied canon law, that he was esteemed the best canonist in England: and his reading in theology was so extensive, and his collections from the fathers so very voluminous, that there were few points in which he was not accurately informed, and on which he could not give the opinions of the several ages of the church from the times of the apostles. "If I had not seen with my own eyes," says Peter Martyr, "I could not easily have believed, with what infinite pains and labour he had digested his great reading into particular chapters, under the heads of councils, canons, decrees," &c.

His parts were solid, rather than shining; and his memory such, that it might be called an index to the books he had read, and the collections he had made.

Henry VIII. had such an opinion of him as a casuist, that he would often say, he could have no difficulty while Cranmer was at his elbow. And indeed we cannot better account for the constant regard which that capricious monarch showed him, than by supposing it proceeded from the opinion the king had of the archbishop's being so useful to him. It was not an unusual thing for Henry to send him a case of conscience at night, (and Henry's conscience was very often troubled,) desiring an answer the next morning. On such slender notice, we are told, the archbishop would often collect the opinions of twenty or thirty writers on the subject, and within the limited time would send all

the extracts, together with his own conclusion on the whole.

Henry, who was deeper in school-divinity than in any other kind of learning, would take great pleasure also in disputing with the archbishop; and, notwithstanding the roughness of his manners, would often indulge that sort of familiarity which emboldened those about him to use freedom with him. The archbishop, at least, was seldom under any difficulty on that head; while the king, on his part, always paid much deference to the primate's learning and abilities, (though the primate was the only person to whom he did pay any deference,) and would sometimes do it at the expense of those who thought themselves on an equality with the most learned. The bishop of Winchester, in particular, the king would sometimes delight to mortify, and to set him on the wrong side of a comparison with the archbishop. We have an instance preserved.

The king once engaged the two prelates in a dispute on the authority of the apostolical canons, in which he himself bore a part. The archbishop sustained the negative. As the dispute proceeded, the king, either sensible of the primate's superiority, or affecting to appear so, cried out, "Come, come, Bishop Winchester, we must leave him, we must leave him: he is too old a truant for either of us."

He was a sensible writer; rather nervous than elegant. His writings were entirely confined to the great controversy which then sub-

sisted ; and contain the whole sum of the theological learning of those times.

His library was filled with a very noble collection of books, and was open to all men of letters. "I meet with authors here," Roger Ascham would say, "which the two universities cannot furnish."

At the archbishop's death the greater part of his original MSS. were left at his palace of Ford, near Canterbury, where they fell into the hands of his enemies.

In the days of Elizabeth, Archbishop Parker, who had an intimation that many of them were still in being, obtained an order from Lord Burleigh, then secretary of state, in the year 1563, to search for them in all suspected places ; and recovered a great number of them. They found their way afterward into some of the principal libraries of England ; but the greatest collection of them were deposited in Bene't College, in Cambridge.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BUT the light in which Archbishop Cranmer appears to most advantage is, in that of a reformer, conducting the great work of a religious establishment ; for which he seems to have had all the necessary qualifications. He was candid, liberal, and open to truth in a great degree. Many of his opinions he reconsidered

and altered, even in his advanced age. Nor was he ever ashamed of owning it; which is, in effect, he thought, being ashamed of owning that a man is wiser to-day than he was yesterday. When his old tenets with regard to the Lord's supper were objected to him, he replied with great simplicity, "I grant that formerly I believed otherwise than I do now; and so I did until my lord of London, Dr. Ridley, did confer with me, and by sundry arguments and authorities of doctors, draw me quite from my persuasion."

To the opinions of others, also, he was very indulgent. One fact indeed, mentioned in his life, the death of G. Paris, is a glaring instance of the contrary. Something, no doubt, so good a man would have to say for himself, if we could hear his plea, in vindication of so barbarous and horrid a piece of bigotry; but as the naked fact now stands, we can only express our astonishment that a single action should so grossly run counter to every other action of his life.

The uncommon caution of his temper likewise qualified him greatly as a reformer. In his conversation he was remarkably guarded. "Three words of his," says Lloyd, "could do more than three hours' discourse of others." In acting he always felt his ground as he proceeded; and had the singular wisdom to forbear attempting things, however desirable, which could not be attained. He rarely admitted any circumstances into his schemes which ought to have been left out; and as rarely left out any which ought to

have been admitted. Hence it was, that he so happily accomplished the most difficult of all works, that of loosening the prejudices of mankind. Hence it was, also, that the ground which he took was so firm as scarce to leave any part of the foundation he laid under the necessity of being strengthened.

The sweetness of his manners also contributed not a little to the completion of his designs. He was a man of a most amiable disposition. His countenance was always enlightened with that cheerful smile that made every body approach him with pleasure. It is indeed surprising how much he was beloved, and how few enemies he made, when we consider that his whole life was a constant opposition to the opinions and prejudices of the times. Whom he could not persuade, he never disoblige. A harsh measure he considered only as another name for an imprudent one. When he could not go on smoothly, he would retreat a few steps, and take other ground till he perceived the obstruction was removed.

The composure of his temper was another happy ingredient in his character as a reformer. It was rarely on any occasion either raised or depressed. His features were by no means an index to the times. His most intimate friends could form no conjecture from his outward behaviour (which was always flowing with benignity) whether he had met with any thing either in parliament or in council to disturb him.

One can scarce, on this occasion, avoid a comparison between him and his successor, Archbishop Laud. Both were equally zealous for religion, and both were engaged in the work of reformation. I mean not to enter into the affair of introducing episcopacy in Scotland; nor to throw any favourable light on the ecclesiastical views of those times. I am at present only considering the measures which the two archbishops took in forwarding their respective plans. While Cranmer pursued his with that caution and temper which we have just been examining, Laud, in the violence of his integrity, (for he was certainly a well-meaning man,) making allowances neither for men nor opinions, was determined to carry all before him. The consequence was, that he did nothing which he attempted; while Cranmer did every thing. And it is probable, that if Henry had chosen such an instrument as Laud, he would have miscarried in his point: while Charles, with such a primate as Cranmer, would either have been successful in his schemes, or at least have avoided the fatal consequences that ensued. But I speak of these things merely as a politician. Providence, no doubt, overruling the ways of men, raises up, on all occasions, such instruments as are most proper to carry on its schemes; sometimes by promoting, and sometimes by defeating, the purposes of mankind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NOR was the good archbishop less formed for a private than a public station. While we revere the virtues of the reformer, we admire the minister of the gospel.

His humility was truly apostolical. He was averse to the sounding titles of the clergy; and when these things, among others, were settled, he would often say, "We might well do without them." A familiar expression of his, on an occasion of this kind, was often afterward remembered. He had signed himself in some public instrument, as he was obliged indeed legally to do, by the style of "primate of all England." At this the bishop of Winchester took great offence; intimating that there was no necessity for that innovation, and throwing out a hint as if it were an encroachment on the king's supremacy. "God knows," said the archbishop, when he heard of the invidious things which Winchester had said, "I value the title of primate no more than I do the paring of an apple." The expression was afterward often quoted by those who were disinclined to all dignities in the church; which they would call in contempt "the parings of Cranmer's apples."

The placability of his temper was equal to his humility. No man ever possessed more Christian charity. The least sign of penitence in an enemy restored him immediately to favour,

and the archbishop was glad of an opportunity of showing the sincerity of his reconciliation. This was so well known to be a part of his character, that the archbishop of York having long, in vain, desired his concurrence in a business to which Cranmer was averse, "Well, my lord," said York, "if I cannot have my suit in one way I will in another. I shall presently do your grace some shrewd turn, and then I doubt not but I can manage so as to obtain my request."

But the archbishop's mildness and placability never appeared in so strong a light as when contrasted, as they often were, with the vehemence of Henry's passions.

A person of great rank at court, who was the archbishop's secret enemy, and had oftener than once done him ill offices, came to him one day to request his interest with the king. The primate with great readiness undertook his cause. "Do you know," said the king, surprised at his request, "for whom you are making suit? Are you acquainted with the man's disposition toward you?" "I always took him," said the archbishop, "for my friend." "No," replied the king, "he is your mortal enemy; and so far am I from granting his request, that I command you, when you see him next, to call him 'knave.'" The archbishop begged his majesty would not oblige him to use language so little becoming a Christian bishop. But Henry vociferated again, "I command you, I say, to call him 'knave;' and tell him that I ordered

you." The primate, however, could not be persuaded by all his majesty's eloquence to call the man "knave;" and the king, though in great agitation at first, was obliged at last to give up the matter with a smile.

He was a very amiable master in his family; and admirably preserved the difficult medium between indulgence and restraint. He had, according to the custom of the times, a very numerous retinue; among whom the most exact order was observed. Every week the steward of his household held a kind of court in the great hall of his palace, in which all family affairs were settled, servants' wages were paid, complaints were heard, and faults examined. Delinquents were publicly rebuked, and, after the third admonition, discharged.

His hospitality and charities were great and noble; equal to his station, greater often than his ability.

A plentiful table was among the virtues of those days. His was always bountifully covered. In an upper room was spread his own, where he seldom wanted company of the first distinction. Here a great many learned foreigners were daily entertained, and partook of his bounty. In his great hall a long table was plentifully covered every day for guests, and strangers of a lower rank; at the upper end of which were three smaller tables, designed for his own officers and inferior gentlemen.

The learned Tremellius, who had himself often been an eye-witness of the archbishop's

hospitality, gives this character of it:—*Archiepiscopi domus, publicum erat doctis, et piis omnibus hospitium; quod ipse hospes, Mecænas, et pater, talibus semper patere voluit, quoad vixit, aut potuit; homo ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΟΣ nec minus ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΟΣ.**

We have seen his character aspersed for want of hospitality. In part the aspersion might have arisen from an attempt he made, with the assistance of the other bishops, to regulate the tables of the clergy, which had lately taken an expensive turn. This expense was introduced by the regular clergy, who could not lay aside the hospitable ideas of their monasteries, though a country benefice would by no means support them. The regulations published on this occasion, ordered, that “an archbishop’s table should not exceed six divers kinds of flesh, or as many of fish on fish-days. A bishop’s should not exceed five; a dean’s four; and none under that degree should exceed three. In a second course, an archbishop was allowed four dishes; a bishop, three; all others, two; as custards, tarts, fritters, cheese, apples, and pears. But if any inferior should entertain a superior, either of the clergy or laity, he might make provision according to the degree

* “The house of the archbishop was a public place of hospitality for all learned and pious men, a place which the host himself, a Mecænas and father, always would have open to such as long as he lived, or had the power. He was a ‘lover of hospitality,’ and no less a ‘lover of learning.’”

of his guest. If any archbishop, or other ecclesiastic, entertained an ambassador, his diet need not be limited." It was further ordered, "that of the greater fish or fowl, as haddock, pike, tench, cranes, turkeys, swans, there should only be one in a dish; of less kinds, as capons, pheasants, woodcocks, but two. Of the still less fowls, an archbishop might have three; all under him, only two."

Among other instances of the archbishop's charity, we have one recorded which was truly noble. After the destruction of monasteries, and before hospitals were erected, the nation saw no species of greater misery than that of wounded and disbanded soldiers. For the use of such miserable objects as were landed on the southern coast of the island, the archbishop fitted up his manor-house of Beckesburn, in Kent. He formed it, indeed, into a complete hospital; appointing a physician, a surgeon, nurses, and every thing proper as well for food as physic. Nor did his charity stop here. Each man, on his recovery, was furnished with money to carry him home, in proportion to the distance of his abode.

To obviate all the cavils of the papists against Archbishop Cranmer, would be to enter into the general argument against them. His apostasy, his marriage, and his opinions, are questions all of common controversy. On the particular miscarriages of his life, I have everywhere touched as they occurred, and have by no

means spared them when they appeared to deserve censure. The general objection, which seems to bear the heaviest upon him, is founded on the pliancy of his temper. Saunders, one of the bitterest of his enemies, sarcastically calls him "*Henricianus*;" and his friends, indeed, find it no easy matter to wipe off these courtly stains. Without question, many instances of great condescension in his character strike us; but a blind submission to the will of princes was, probably, considered among the Christian virtues of those days.

On the other hand, when we see him, singly and frequently, oppose the fury of an inflamed tyrant; when we see him make that noble stand against bigotry in the affair of the Six Articles; or when we see him the only person who durst inform a passionate and jealous prince of the infidelity of a favourite wife; we cannot but allow there was great firmness in his character, and must suppose that he drew a line in his own conscience to direct him in what matters he ought, and in what matters he ought not, to comply with his prince's will.

He left behind him a widow and children; but as he always kept his family in obscurity, for prudential reasons, we know little about them. They had been kindly provided for by Henry VIII., who, without any solicitation from the primate himself, gave him a considerable grant from the abbey of Welbeck, in Nottinghamshire; which his family enjoyed after his

decease. King Edward made some addition to his private fortune; and his heirs were restored in blood by an act of parliament, in the reign of Elizabeth.

THE END.

THE LIFE
OF
HUGH LATIMER,

BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GILPIN, M. A.

THE LIFE
OF
HUGH LATIMER.

CHAPTER I.

HUGH LATIMER was born at Thurcaston, in Leicestershire, about the year 1470. His father was a yeoman of good reputation; and, on a small farm, in those frugal times, maintained a large family,—six daughters and a son. Mr. Latimer, in one of his court sermons in King Edward's time, inveighing against the oppression then exercised in the country by the nobility and gentry, and speaking of the moderation of landlords a few years before, and the plenty in which their tenants lived, gives his audience, in his familiar way, this entertaining picture of an old English yeoman. "My father," says he, "upon a farm of four pounds a year at the utmost, tilled as much ground as kept half a dozen men; he had it stocked with a hundred sheep, and thirty cows; he found the king a man and horse, himself remembering to have buckled on his father's harness when he went to Blackheath; he gave his daughters five pounds a piece at marriage; he lived hospitably among his neighbours, and was not backward in his alms to the poor."

We meet with no accounts of Mr. Latimer worth relating till we find him a master of arts, in priest's orders, at Cambridge. Here his youth had been wholly employed on the divinity of the times. He read the schoolmen and the Scriptures with the same reverence, and held Thomas à Becket and the apostles in equal honour; in a word, he was a zealous papist.

Many of the reformed opinions, which were then fermenting in Germany, had by this time discovered themselves in England. The legislature had not yet interfered; but the clergy had taken the alarm, and the danger of the church was already become the popular cry. Mr. Latimer, among others, heard with high indignation these novel teachers: zeal wrought the same effect in him that interest did in the many; and while others were apprehensive that their temporals were in danger, he was concerned for the souls of men. The last times, he thought, were now approaching; impiety was gaining ground apace: what lengths might not men be expected to run when they began to question even the infallibility of the pope!

As his well-meant zeal was thus inflamed, it of course broke out into all the effects of bigotry. He inveighed publicly and privately against the reformers. If any person suspected of holding their tenets read lectures in the schools, Mr. Latimer was sure to be there to drive out the scholars; and having an opportunity, when he commenced bachelor of divinity, to give an open testimony of his dislike to their proceedings, he

made an oration against Melancthon, whom he treated with great severity for his impious innovations in religion. His zeal was so much taken notice of in the university that he was elected into the office of cross-bearer in all public processions; an employment which he accepted with reverence, and discharged with becoming solemnity.

Among those in Cambridge who at this time favoured the Reformation, the most considerable was Thomas Bilney. He was a man of a holy life; and having long observed the scandalous state of monkery in the nation, and the prevailing debauchery of the clergy, he was led to doubt whether their principles might not be as corrupt as their practice; and whether the new opinions then gaining ground might not be more than plausible. Time increased his suspicions. He read Luther's writings, and approved them. He conversed with Protestants, and found them men of temper and learning. He talked with papists, and observed a bitterness and rancour in their style which ill became a good cause. In short, he began to see popery in a very disagreeable light; and made no scruple to own it.

It was Mr. Latimer's good fortune to be well acquainted with Mr. Bilney; who had likewise conceived very favourable sentiments of him. Bilney had known his life in the university, a life strictly moral and devout: he ascribed his failings to the genius of his religion; and, notwithstanding his more than ordinary zeal in

the profession of that religion, he appeared so candid, and so entirely unprejudiced by any sinister views, that he could not but be open to any truths that should be set properly before him.

Induced by these favourable appearances, Mr. Bilney failed not, as opportunities offered, to suggest many things to him, in general, about corruptions in religion; and would frequently drop a hint, that in the Romish Church in particular there were, perhaps, some things which rather deviated from apostolic plainness. He would instance in some of its grosser tenets; and ask whether the Scriptural authority alleged for them was wholly sufficient: if not, whether tradition were a safe vehicle for doctrines of such importance. Thus starting cavils, and infusing suspicions, he prepared the way for his whole creed, which at length he opened; concluding with an earnest persuasion that Mr. Latimer would only place the two sides of the question before him, and take an honest conscience for his guide.

How Mr. Latimer at first received these free declarations, and by what steps he attained a settlement in his religious opinions, we meet with no account; this only we find in general, that Mr. Bilney's friendship toward him had its effect.

Mr. Latimer no sooner ceased from being a zealous papist, than he became, agreeably to the warmth of his constitution, a zealous Protestant. He had nothing of that neutral cool-

ness in his temper which the Athenian lawgiver discouraged in a commonwealth. Accordingly, we soon find him very active in supporting and propagating the reformed opinions. He endeavoured with great assiduity to make converts, both in the town and in the university; preaching in public, exhorting in private, and everywhere pressing the necessity of a holy life, in opposition to those outward performances which were then thought the essentials of religion.

A behaviour of this kind was soon taken notice of. Cambridge was the seat of ignorance, bigotry, and superstition; every new opinion was watched with the utmost jealousy; and Mr. Latimer was soon considered as one who wished ill to the established church.

The first remarkable opposition he met with from the popish party was occasioned by a course of sermons which he preached, during the holydays of Christmas, before the university. In these sermons he showed the impiety of indulgences, the uncertainty of tradition, and the vanity of works of supererogation; he inveighed against that multiplicity of ceremonies with which true religion was encumbered, and the pride and usurpation of the Romish hierarchy: but what he most insisted on was, that great abuse of locking up the Scripture in an unknown tongue; giving his reasons, without any reserve, why it ought to be put in every one's hands.

Few of the tenets of popery were then questioned in England, but such as tended to a

relaxation of morals. Transubstantiation, and other points of a speculative cast, still held their dominion. Mr. Latimer, therefore, chiefly dwelt upon those of immoral tendency. He showed what true religion was; that it was seated in the heart; and that, in comparison with it, external appointments were of no value.

Great was the outcry occasioned by these discourses. Mr. Latimer was then a preacher of some eminence, and began to display a remarkable address in adapting himself to the capacities of the people. The orthodox clergy, observing him thus followed, thought it high time to oppose him openly. This task was undertaken by Dr. Buckenham, prior of the Black Friars, who appeared in the pulpit a few Sundays after; and, with great pomp and prolixity, showed the dangerous tendency of Mr. Latimer's opinions: particularly he inveighed against his heretical notions of having the Scriptures in English, laying open the ill effects of such an innovation. "If that heresy," said he, "should prevail, we should soon see an end of every thing useful among us. The ploughman, reading that if he put his hand to the plough and should happen to look back, he was unfit for the kingdom of God, would soon lay aside his labour; the baker, likewise, reading that a little leaven will corrupt his lump, would give us very insipid bread; the simple man, likewise, finding himself commanded to pluck out his eyes, in a few years we should have the nation full of blind beggars."

Mr. Latimer could not help listening with a secret pleasure to this ingenious reasoning. Perhaps he had acted as prudently if he had considered the prior's arguments as unanswerable; but he was then a young man, and could not resist the vivacity of his temper, which strongly inclined him to expose this solemn trifler.

The whole university met together on Sunday, when it was known Mr. Latimer would preach. That vein of pleasantry and humour which ran through all his words and actions would have here, it was imagined, full scope; and, to say the truth, the preacher was not a little conscious of his own superiority. To complete the scene, Prior Buckenham himself entered the church, with his cowl about his shoulders, and seated himself before the pulpit.

Mr. Latimer with great gravity recapitulated the learned doctor's arguments, placed them in the strongest light, and then rallied them with such a flow of wit, and at the same time with so much good humour, that, without the appearance of ill-nature, he made his adversary in the highest degree ridiculous. He then with great address appealed to the people, descanted upon the low esteem in which their holy guides had always held their understandings, expressed the utmost offence at their being treated with such contempt, and wished his honest countrymen might only have the use of the Scripture till they showed themselves such absurd interpreters. He concluded his discourse with a

few observations upon Scripture metaphors. A figurative manner of speech, he said, was common in all languages; representations of this kind were in daily use, and generally understood. "Thus, for instance," said he, "when we see a fox painted in a friar's hood, nobody imagines that a fox is meant; but that craft and hypocrisy are described, which are so often found disguised in that garb." Thus was a wise man misled by the impulse of vanity, and highly delighted with the little glory of having made a dunce ridiculous.

It is probable Mr. Latimer himself thought this levity unbecoming; for, when Venetus not long after attacked him upon the same subject, and in manner the most scurrilous and provoking, we find him using a graver strain. He answers, like a scholar, what is worth answering; and, like a man of sense, leaves the absurd part to confute itself. Whether he ridiculed, however, or reasoned, his harangues were so animated that they seldom failed of their intended effect: his raillery shut up the prior within his monastery, and his arguments drove Venetus from the university.

These advantages increased the credit of the Protestant party in Cambridge, of which Bilney and Latimer were at the head. The meekness, gravity, and unaffected piety of the former, and the cheerfulness, good humour, and eloquence of the latter, wrought much upon the junior students.

These things greatly alarmed the orthodox

clergy. Of his sort were all the heads of colleges, and, in general, the senior part of the university. Frequent convocations were held; tutors were admonished to have a strict eye over their pupils; and academical censures of all kinds were inflicted.

But academical censures were found insufficient. Mr. Latimer continued to preach, and heresy to spread. The true spirit of popery, therefore, began to exert itself, and to call aloud for the secular arm.

Dr. West was at that time bishop of Ely. To him, as their diocesan, the heads of the popish party applied. But the bishop was not a man for their purpose: he was a papist, indeed, but moderate. He came to Cambridge, however; examined the state of religion, and, at their entreaty, preached against heretics; but he would do nothing further. Only, indeed, he silenced Mr. Latimer; which, as he had preached himself, was an instance of his prudence.

This gave no great check to the reformers. There happened, at that time, to be a Protestant prior in Cambridge, Dr. Barnes, of the Austin Friars. His monastery was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction; and the prior being a great admirer of Mr. Latimer, he boldly licensed him to preach in his house. Hither his party followed him; and the late opposition having greatly excited the curiosity of the people, the Friars' chapel was soon unable to contain the crowds that attended. Among others, it is re-

markable that the bishop of Ely was often one of his hearers ; and was candid enough to declare, that Mr. Latimer was one of the best preachers he had ever heard.

The credit to his cause which Mr. Latimer had thus gained by preaching, he maintained by a holy life. Mr. Bilney and he did not satisfy themselves with acting unexceptionably, but were daily giving instances of goodness, which malice could not scandalize, nor envy misinterpret. They were always together, concerting their schemes. The place where they used to walk was long afterward known by the name of the Heretics'-hill. Cambridge at that time was full of their good actions : their charities to the poor, and friendly visits to the sick and unhappy, were then common topics.

But their good lives had no merit with their adversaries. With them it mattered not what a man's life was, if his opinions were orthodox. They could give great allowances for the former ; but the least mistake in the latter was unpardonable. Such is the true spirit of bigotry and priestcraft ; that pharisaical spirit which, inverting the tables of the law, places points of least importance uppermost.

More of this spirit never reigned than at this time in Cambridge. The popish party, among whom charity seemed extinguished, were now inflamed to the uttermost. The good actions of their adversaries served only as fuel to increase the heat of persecution. Impotent themselves, and finding their diocesan either unable or

unwilling to work their purposes, they determined, at length, upon an appeal to the higher powers. Here, at least, they expected countenance. Heavy complaints were accordingly carried to court of the increase of heresy, and formal depositions against the principal abettors of it.

But as a new scene will here open, and different characters make their appearance, it will be necessary to give some account of the times, and of the most considerable persons then in action.

CHAPTER II.

PROTESTANTISM, which was now spreading apace in Germany, and many other parts of Europe, had yet met with no public countenance in England. The regular clergy, encroaching more and more, had, at length, engrossed one-third of the kingdom. A large share of temporal power was the consequence of this wealth; and the gross ignorance of the times established them as fully in a spiritual dominion. From the days of Wicliffe, many began to speak with some freedom, and to think with more, of the prevailing corruptions of popery. But severe laws, purchased of needy kings, and executed by cruel priests, held these sectaries in awe. The inclinations of the people, however, through this whole period of time,

ran strong against the clergy; and Luther was more than a little obliged to Wicliffe for his reception in England.

As soon, therefore, as the opinions of the reformers were introduced, they were warmly espoused; the generality of the people were disposed in favour of them; and Protestants in many places began to form parties. But, in those intolerant times, when kings thought for their subjects, private opinion and the inclinations of the people were little consulted; reasons of state prevailed; and Henry VIII., who then reigned in England, had yet his motives for holding fair with the court of Rome.

The great cause which at this time held the nation attentive was the king's divorce; a suit of law one of the most famous in history. After cohabiting nearly twenty years with his brother's wife, this religious prince, upon the appearance of Ann Boleyn at court, was suddenly seized with scruples of conscience about the legality of his marriage; and not only schoolmen and canonists, but popes and emperors, were concerned in the affair.

At that time one of the most wily prelates held the see of Rome. He had interests to manage with Charles V., who was averse from the divorce. He had interests likewise to manage with Henry. These cross circumstances called for all his subtlety. And indeed he showed himself a master of address. He amused each in his turn, and meant honestly to neither; perplexing, palliating, explaining,

and perplexing again, that he might thoroughly deliberate before he chose his party. The emperor, in the meantime, was satisfied with his conduct; and Henry thought him tardy indeed, but still never doubted his disposition to serve him. A legantine court was erected in England, and the affair went on with all the despatch that two solemn cardinals could make.

While the king thus expected an end of his business in a regular way, which of all things he desired, he was careful in observing all forms of civility with the pope. The poor Protestants, in many instances, felt the effects of his complaisance. He even went so far as to use his own princely pen against them; and, as the courtiers of his time used to say, wrote incomparably well. No new laws, indeed, were enacted. The old ones against Wicliffe's heresy were thought sufficient. These statutes were revived; and the bishops, in several parts of the kingdom, took very effectual pains to make those under their care acquainted with them.

The principal persons at this time concerned in ecclesiastical affairs were, Cardinal Wolsey, Warham archbishop of Canterbury, and Tunstal bishop of London.

Wolsey had as few virtues to qualify as many vices as most men. Abilities, indeed, he had, the abilities of a statesman; but his chief merit was an artful application to his master's foibles: he could condescend even to serve his pleasures. Where his prince's humours did not

interfere, the principal springs of his conduct were ambition, pride, and avarice; all which vices he found the means to gratify in a manner unparalleled in English story. It was humorously said, he held the Church of England *in commendam*. As to matters of faith, he was easy, and was therefore, indeed, no zealot; in practice he scarcely observed decency; yet he was a great advocate for the reformation of the clergy, and contributed every way toward it but by setting a good example.

Warham was now an old man. He had been the favourite of the last reign, and was practised in all the artifices of Henry VIIIth's policy; an able statesman, and an artful courtier. But he had outlived his capacity for business; had withdrawn himself from all court dependencies, and led at this time a very retired life; indulging a polite indolence among learned men, of whom he was a great patron; himself a man of letters. The duties of his function, he thought, consisted chiefly in opposing heretics; and the severest kind of opposition he thought the best. In other respects he was a good man, would have been no disgrace to a better religion, and was an ornament to popery.

But of all the prelates of those times, Cuthbert Tunstal, bishop of London, was most deservedly esteemed. He was a papist only by profession, no way influenced by the spirit of popery; he was a good Catholic, and had just notions of the genius of Christianity. He considered a holy life as the end, and faith as the

means; and never branded as a heretic that person, however erroneous his opinions might be in points less fundamental, who had such a belief in Christ as made him live like a Christian. He was just the reverse therefore of Warham, and thought the persecution of Protestants one of the things most foreign to his function. For parts and learning he was eminent; his knowledge was extensive; and his taste in letters superior to most of his contemporaries. The great foible of which he stands accused in history, was the pliancy of his temper. Like most of the bishops of those times, he had been bred in a court; and was, indeed, too dexterous in the arts there practised.

Such was the situation of things, and such the persons in power, when complaints came from Cambridge of the daily increase of heresy. Tunstal, with an air of sanctity, shook his head, declaring it was shameful indeed, very shameful. Warham raged loud, and talked of nothing but fire and extirpation, root and branch; while the cardinal treated the whole as a jest, attributing it to the envy of a few illiterate priests against men of superior merit.

But complaints from Cambridge increasing daily, and Warham of course growing more importunate, the cardinal was at length obliged to shake off his indifference, and begin to act. He erected a court therefore, consisting of bishops, divines, and canonists. Tunstal was made president; and Bilney, Latimer, and one or two more, were called upon to answer for their con-

duct. Bilney was considered as the heresiarch; and against him, chiefly, the rigour of the court was levelled. His examination was accordingly severe; every witness was heard with so much attention, and every disposition enlarged upon with so much bitterness, that Tunstal despaired of mixing any temper with the proceedings of his colleagues. The process came to an end; and the criminal, declaring himself what they called "an obstinate heretic," was found guilty. Here Tunstal had an opportunity to show the goodness of his heart. He could not interfere in Mr. Bilney's favour in a judicial way; but he laboured to save him by all the means in his power. He first set his friends upon him, to persuade him to recant; and when that would not do, he joined his entreaties to theirs, had patience with him day after day, and, with all the tenderness of humanity, begged he would not oblige him, contrary to his inclinations, to treat him with severity. The good bishop in the end prevailed: Bilney could not withstand the winning rhetoric of Tunstal, though he had withstood all the menaces of the inflamed Warham. He recanted, bore his faggot, and was dismissed.

As for Mr. Latimer, and the rest, they had easier terms: Tunstal omitted no opportunities of showing mercy, and was dexterous in finding them; though it is probable that, among so many voices, he would hardly have prevailed, if the cardinal had not countenanced his proceedings.

The heretics, upon their dismissal, returned to Cambridge, where they were received with open arms by their friends. Amidst this mutual joy, Bilney alone seemed unaffected; he shunned the sight of his acquaintance, and received their officious congratulations with confusion and blushes. Reflection had now brought him to himself; and remorse of conscience had seized him for what he had done. Restless nights, frightful dreams, and other effects of a mind that preys upon itself, in a short time disturbed his reason; and it was feared he might have committed something horrid, if those about him had not closely attended him. In the agonies of his despair, his pathetic and eager accusations of his friends, of the bishop of London, and, above all, of himself, were very affecting. Thus he continued for some time one of the most shocking spectacles that human nature can exhibit. His grief, having had its course, at length subsided, and by degrees gave place to a profound melancholy. In this state he continued about three years, reading much, avoiding company, and, in all respects, observing the severity of an ascetic. During this time, and especially toward the latter part of it, he would frequently be throwing out obscure hints of his meditating some extraordinary design. He would say, that he was now almost prepared; that he would shortly go up to Jerusalem; and that God must be glorified in him. After keeping his friends awhile in suspense by this mysterious language, he told them, at

last, that he was fully determined to repair his late shameful abjuration by his death. What they could oppose had no weight. He had taken his resolution ; and, breaking at once from all his attachments in Cambridge, he set out for Norfolk, which was the place of his nativity, and which, for that reason, he chose to make the scene of his death. When he came there, he went about the country confessing his guilt in abjuring a faith in which he was now determined to die. Popery, he told the people, was a most diabolical religion ; and exhorted them to beware of idolatry, and to trust no longer in the cowl of St. Francis, in prayers to saints, in pilgrimages, penances, and indulgences ; but rather to believe in Jesus Christ, and to lead holy lives, which was all that God required of them.

The report of this very extraordinary preacher soon reached the ears of the bishop of Norwich, who watched over those parts with the zeal of an inquisitor. Mr. Bilney was apprehended, and secured in the county jail. While he lay there, waiting the arrival of the writ for his execution, he gave very surprising instances of a firm and collected mind. He began now to recover from that abject state of melancholy which had for these last three years oppressed him ; and, like an honest man, who had long lived under a difficult debt, he began to resume his spirits, when he thought himself in a situation to discharge it. Some of his friends found him eating a hearty supper the night before his

execution ; and expressing their surprise, he told them he was but doing what they had daily examples of in common life,—he was only keeping his cottage in repair while he continued to inhabit it. The same composure ran through his whole behaviour ; and his conversation was that evening more agreeable than his friends had ever remembered it. He dwelt much upon a passage in Isaiah, which he said gave him great comfort : “ Fear not, for I have redeemed thee ; thou art mine. When thou walkest in the fire, it shall not burn thee ; I am the Lord thy God.” With equal constancy he went through his last trial. His death, which Mr. Fox relates at large, was as noble an instance of Christian courage as those times, fruitful of such examples, afforded. The popish party would have had it afterward believed that he died in their faith ; and great pains were taken by many of them to propagate the story ; particularly by Sir Thomas More, whose opinions in religion were as confined as his sentiments on all other subjects were enlarged : but Mr. Fox, Bishop Burnet, and others, have sufficiently refuted the many idle things which were said on that occasion.

The following account of him, Mr. Latimer hath left us in a letter to a friend :—

“ I have known Bilney,” says he, “ a great while ; and to tell you what I have always thought of him, I have known few so ready to do every man good, after his power ; noisome wittingly to none ; and toward his enemy cha-

ritable and reconcilable. To be short, he was a very simple, good soul, nothing meet for this wretched world ; whose evil state he would lament and bewail as much as any man that I ever knew. As for his singular learning, as well in the holy Scriptures as in other good letters, I will not now speak of it. How he ordered or misordered himself in judgment, I cannot tell, nor will I meddle withal ; but I cannot but wonder, if a man living so mercifully, so charitably, so patiently, so continently, so studiously, and so virtuously, should die an evil death."

CHAPTER III.

MR. BILNEY'S sufferings, instead of checking the reformation at Cambridge, inspired the leaders of it with new courage. Mr. Latimer, in particular, began now to exert himself more than he had yet done ; and succeeded to that credit with his party which Mr. Bilney had so long supported. Among other instances of his zeal and resolution in this cause, he gave one which was indeed very remarkable. He had the courage to write to the king against a proclamation then just published, forbidding the use of the Bible in English, and other books on religious subjects. The affair was this :—

Ever since the Reformation had any footing in the kingdom, great care had been taken by the promoters of it to propagate among the

people a variety of tracts, some on the points then in controversy, others, and the greater part, on the corruptions of the clergy. These books were printed abroad, and sent over in great quantities. Among other works of this kind, a translation of the New Testament was dispersed. Great were the clamours of the orthodox against these malignant and pestiferous writings, as they were then called. But as the government did not interfere, the bishops could only use the authority of the laws then in force, in guarding against these invasions of heresy. Episcopal injunctions were accordingly published, and all possible care was taken. But the laws then in force did not entirely touch the case: printing and publishing were new affairs; and none of the statutes were particularly pointed against heretical books. Something more, therefore, must be obtained from the government.

It happened, that, among other tracts then dispersed, there was one written in warmer language than ordinary. It was entitled, "The Supplication of the Beggars," and contained a very severe invective against the regular clergy, whose exorbitant exactions upon the people were there represented as the chief source of all the poverty in the nation. This piece roused the whole body of the clergy; and the cardinal being at their head, a successful application was made to the king, who immediately issued a severe proclamation against heretical books, commanding that all such books should be de-

livered up within fifteen days, and empowering the bishops to imprison at pleasure all persons suspected of having them, till the party had purged himself or abjured : it empowered the bishops, likewise, to set an arbitrary fine upon all persons convicted. It further forbad all appeals from ecclesiastical courts ; and obliged all civil officers, on oath, to use their utmost endeavours to extirpate heresy, and assist the bishops ; justices were to inquire, at their quarterly sessions, into the state of religion in their counties ; and sheriffs were to arrest all suspected persons, and deliver them to the bishops.

The sword thus put into the hands of the bishops was presently unsheathed. The effects of this proclamation (and in that reign proclamations had the force of law) were dreadful. It would surprise the good people of England, at this day, to hear that many of their forefathers were then burned for reading the Bible, and teaching their children the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer, in English. Such things were then called "heresy."

On this occasion Mr. Latimer took upon him to write to the king. He had preached before Henry once or twice at Windsor, and had been taken notice of by him in a more affable manner than that monarch usually indulged toward his subjects. But whatever hopes of preferment his sovereign's favour might have raised in him, he chose to put all to the hazard, rather than to omit what he thought his duty. He was generally considered as one of the most

eminent of those who favoured Protestantism; and therefore thought it became him to be one of the most forward in opposing popery. His letter is the picture of an honest, sincere heart. It was chiefly intended to point out to the king the bad intention of the bishops in procuring the proclamation. I shall present the reader with the substance of it:—

“ST. AUGUSTINE, in an epistle to Casulanus, tells us, that ‘he who through fear hideth the truth, provoketh the wrath of Heaven, as a person who fears man more than God.’ And St. Chrysostom, to the same effect, gives it as his opinion, that ‘a person may betray the truth as well by concealing it as disguising it.’ These sentences, great king, occurred to me very lately; and have had such an effect upon me, that I must either open my conscience to your majesty, or rank myself among such persons as these two holy fathers censure. The latter I cannot think of.

“But, alas! there are men upon whom such severe censures have no effect; there are men who, pretending to be guides and teachers in religion, not only conceal the truth, but prohibit others to set it forth; blind guides, who shut up the kingdom of heaven from men, and will neither enter in themselves, neither suffer them that would to enter. And, not content with obstructing the word of God to the utmost of their own authority, they have contrived, by their subtle practices, to draw in to their assistance the civil power in almost all the states of Chris-

tendom. In this nation, especially, they have long imposed upon men by their delusions, and kept them in awe by their spiritual censures; and, when they saw the truth likely to prevail and gather strength from their opposition, they have, at length, obtained your majesty's proclamation in their favour, and have got it declared treason to read the Scriptures in English.

"Hear me, I beseech your majesty, a few words, and let me entreat you to call to mind the example of Christ and his apostles, their manner of life, their preaching, and whole behaviour; that, comparing them with the spiritual guides of these days, your majesty may the better judge who are the true followers of Christ.

"And, first, it is evident that simplicity of manners, and hearts sequestered from the world, were the striking characteristics of the first preachers of the gospel, and of our blessed Lord himself. Poverty in spirit was then practised as well as preached. Alas! it is since those days that Christian teachers, masking their worldly hearts under a pretence of voluntary poverty, and an exclusion from carnal things, have wormed themselves into more than regal wealth; and have wickedly kept what they have craftily obtained, by fomenting foreign or domestic strife in all places, as their purposes were best served; and by blasphemously dealing out even the punishments of Heaven against all who had resolution enough to make any stand against their corruptions. By what arts

they have evaded a late act of parliament against their encroachments, your majesty well knows. Think not, gracious sovereign, that I exceed the bounds of charity in what I say; I only offer to your majesty's consideration a rule which was once prescribed by a greater Master: 'By their fruits you shall know them.'

"Another mark of the true disciples of Christ is, their being at all times exposed to persecution. It would be endless to quote all the passages of Scripture in which this burden is universally laid upon good Christians. Contempt and reproach is their common lot, and often the most violent persecutions, even to death itself. Wherever, therefore, the word of God is truly preached, you must expect to see persecution in one shape or other. On the contrary, wherever you see ease, and luxury, and a quiet possession of worldly pleasures, there the truth cannot possibly be. For the world loveth only such as are worldly; and the favourers of the gospel can expect nothing in it from reason, and are promised nothing in it by Scripture, but vexation and trouble. From this distinction, again, your majesty, by the assistance of the above-mentioned rule, 'By their fruits you shall know them,' will be able to judge who are the true followers of Christ; wherever you observe persecution, there is more than a probability that the truth lies on the persecuted side.

"As for a notion which has been infused into your majesty, that the Scriptures in the hands of the people might move them to rebellion,

your majesty may judge of the falsehood of this likewise by the same rule : ' By their fruit you shall know them.' How is it possible that a book which inculcates obedience to magistrates with the greatest earnestness, can be the cause of sedition ? The thing speaks itself, and discovers only how much their malice is at a loss for topics of invective.

" When King David sent ambassadors to the young king of the Ammonites to condole with him upon the death of his father, your majesty may remember what unadvised counsel was given to that rash prince. His counsellors put it into his head, contrary to all reason, that David's messengers came only as spies, and that David certainly meant an invasion. The young king, upon this, without further ceremony, wantonly shaved the heads of the ambassadors, and treated them with other marks of contempt. But the following verses inform us how the affair ended. The destruction of the whole land, we read, was the consequence of the king's listening to imprudent counsel.

" Let not, great king, this fact find its parallel in English story. The ambassadors of a great prince are now making suit to you ; the holy evangelists and apostles of Christ. Be upon your guard ; and believe not the idle tales of those who would persuade you that these messengers of peace are coming to foment sedition in your land. Would your majesty know the true cause of this ' confederacy,' as I may well

call it, against the word of God, examine the lives of those who are the leaders of it, and consider whether there may not be some private reasons inducing such persons to keep a book in concealment, which cries out loudly against all kinds of sin. And if your majesty wants to know the source of rebellions, I think a much fairer one may be conjectured at, than the use of an English Bible. For my own part, I have long been of opinion that a greater encouragement of all kinds of civil disorder could hardly have been invented than the church-trade of pardons and indulgences; to which may be added the bad examples of the clergy, and the little care they are generally thought to take in the discharge of their duty.

“As for those who are now in question on the account of your majesty’s late proclamation, I am credibly informed there is not one among them who hath not demeaned himself as a peaceable and good subject in every instance; excepting only in this one case, in which they thought their religion and consciences concerned. In this particular, however, I excuse them not; nor will I take upon me entirely to defend the books for which they suffer; for, indeed, many of them I have never read: only this your majesty must give me leave to say, that it is impossible the many inconveniences can follow from these books, and especially from the Scripture, which they would persuade mankind will follow.

“Accept, gracious sovereign, without dis-

pleasure, what I have written. I thought it my duty to mention these things to your majesty. No personal quarrel, as God shall judge me, have I with any man : I wanted only to induce your majesty to consider well what kind of persons you have about you, and the ends for which they counsel : indeed, great prince, many of them have very private ends, or they are much slandered. God grant your majesty may see through all the designs of evil men ; and be in all things equal to the high office with which you are intrusted !”

He concludes his letter with these very emphatical words :—

“ Wherefore, gracious king, remember yourself : have pity upon your own soul ; and think that the day is at hand when you shall give account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed by your sword. In the which day that your grace may stand steadfastly, and not be ashamed, but be clear and ready in your reckoning, and have your pardon sealed with the blood of our Saviour Christ, which only serveth at that day,—is my daily prayer to Him who suffered death for our sins. The Spirit of God preserve you !”

With such freedom did this true minister of the gospel address his sovereign. But the influence of the popish party had more effect than his letter. The king, however, no way displeased, received it not only with temper, but with great condescension ; and graciously thanked him for his well-intended advice.

CHAPTER IV.

THE king's divorce was not yet brought to an issue. The pope, terrified by an imperial army hovering over him, and yet afraid of the defection of England, was still endeavouring to hold the balance even between Charles V. and Henry. The legatine court, therefore, under the influence of Rome, became of course very deliberate in its determinations. The tediousness of the suit at length got the better of the king of England's patience. His uncontrollable spirit broke out; and finding himself duped by the pope, he disclaimed his authority in the affair, took it into his own hands, and had it determined within his own realm. Having gone thus far in defiance of the see of Rome, and finding his throne yet unshaken, he was proceeding further. But the pope beginning to temporize, a reconciliation was thought at hand. The imperial faction, however, once again prevailed. Henry's measures were traversed; and himself, in the person of his ambassador, treated with indignity.

Hitherto Henry was secretly inclined to a reconciliation with Rome; but his resentment of this usage took such entire possession of him, that from this time he determined absolutely to throw off the papal yoke. Upon such slender pivots as even the passions of men do the grand schemes of Providence often turn!

Soon after Henry had taken this resolution,

the affair was brought into parliament; and the king's supremacy was everywhere the popular topic.

The usurpations of the pope had, before this time, been the subject of a parliamentary inquiry. Through many preceding reigns, the exactions of the holy see had been so oppressive, that the legislature was often applied to for redress; and many laws, breathing a noble spirit of freedom, had been enacted, by which the Roman power was much abridged. Of these the most famous were the statute against the pope's tax-gatherers, commonly called "the statute against provisors;" and the statute of *præmunire*, prohibiting bulls and other instruments from Rome.

But notwithstanding these and many other bold laws were enacted, no effect was produced. They were promulged and laid aside. The influence of the vatican was yet too considerable to suffer any very spirited attacks upon its power.

Neglected, however, as these statutes were, they served as precedents for Henry's parliament, which concurred entirely with the king's inclinations. Luther's exceptions were now growing popular; every year brought something to light which prejudiced men more against the doctrine, or the discipline, or the priesthood of the Church of Rome. The parliament, therefore, wanted little inducement to turn their counsels upon any thing which tended to reformation. Thus the king, with less difficulty than commonly attends such important revolutions,

got the pope's power abrogated in England, and his own supremacy established in its stead.

The part which Mr. Latimer acted in this affair was one of the first things which brought him forward in life.

Whatever motives in earnest influenced King Henry, he had always policy enough to pay an outward regard, at least, to those of conscience. He took care, therefore, to resolve his scruples before he gratified his passions. Thus he had the opinion of all the divines in Europe, before he ventured upon his divorce. And thus, in the present case, he durst not assert his supremacy till he had consulted with the ablest canonists of his realm, and fully satisfied himself that what he did was agreeable to the Old and New Testament.

Among those who served him in this business, was Dr. Butts, his physician; who, from the slender accounts preserved of him in history, appears to have been a person of great honesty, learning, and humanity. Mr. Fox calls him "a singular good man, and a special favourer of good proceedings."

This gentleman, being sent to Cambridge upon the occasion mentioned, began immediately to pay his court to the Protestant party, from whom the king expected most unanimity in his favour. Among the first, he made his application to Mr. Latimer, as a person most likely to serve him; begging that he would collect the opinions of his friends in the case, and do his utmost to bring over those of most eminence,

who were still inclined to the papacy. Mr. Latimer, who was a thorough friend to the cause he was to solicit, undertook it with his usual zeal; and discharged himself so much to the satisfaction of the doctor, that when that gentleman returned to court, he took Mr. Latimer along with him; with a view, no doubt, to procure him something answerable to his merits.

About this time, a person was rising into power, who became afterward Mr. Latimer's chief friend and patron,—the great Lord Cromwell; a person in all respects so formed for command, that we admire him through history, as one of those great instruments which Providence often raises up, and seems to inspire for some great purpose. His descent was mean, but his enterprising genius soon raised him above the obscurity of his birth. We find him first abroad, leading a wild romantic life in various capacities. In Holland he was a hackney writer; in Italy a foot soldier. After spending a very dissipated youth in this vague way, he returned home, and was taken into the service of Cardinal Wolsey, who in a short time made him his secretary. Under this sagacious minister he began to methodize the large fund of knowledge he had been treasuring up; and was soon valued by the cardinal, who was never ill-served, as one of the ablest of his servants. The cardinal's fall was his rise; but he rose not, like most favourites, by betraying, but by defending, his master. Wolsey had arrived at the full meridian of his glory; that critical point

at which human grandeur begins to decline. The distressed minister was now at bay, pressed hard by a parliamentary inquiry. The king had withdrawn his favour from him, and all his dependants (those summer-flies of a great man's sunshine) began to shrink and die away. Cromwell alone, with a generosity almost unparalleled in history, boldly maintained his cause; and pleaded for him so forcibly before the commons, that if his ruin had not been a thing resolved on, he bade fair to avert it. Wolsey fell; but Cromwell's generosity was rewarded.

The king was pleased with his behaviour, marked his abilities, from that time favoured, and soon employed him. His great talents quickly recommended him to the highest trusts; and his sovereign used his services almost implicitly.

As this eminent person was a friend to the Reformation, he encouraged, of course, such churchmen as were inclined toward it. Among others, Mr. Latimer was one of his favourites, to whom he took all opportunities of showing his regard; and, as Mr. Latimer had at this time no employment in London, his patron very soon obtained a benefice for him.

This benefice was in Wiltshire; whither Mr. Latimer resolved, as soon as possible, to repair, and keep a constant residence. His friend Dr. Butts, surprised at his resolution, did what he could to persuade him from it. He was deserting, he told him, the fairest appearances of making his fortune. "The prime

minister," says he, "intends this only as an earnest of his future favours, and will certainly in time do great things for you. But it is the manner of courts to consider those as provided for, who seem to be satisfied; and take my word for it, an absent claimant stands but a poor chance among rivals who are on the spot." Thus the old courtier advised. But Mr. Latimer was not a man on whom such arguments had any weight. He had no other notion of making his fortune than that of putting himself in a way of being useful. "Great" and "good" were with him words of the same meaning. And though he knew his friend's advice was well-meant, yet he knew, at the same time, that a man may as easily be deceived by the kindness of his friend as by the guile of his enemy. Besides, he was heartily tired of a court. He had yet seen little of the world; and was shocked to be introduced at once to a place where he saw vice in every shape triumphant; where factions raged; where all the arts of malice were practised; where vanity and folly prevailed, debauchery of manners, dissimulation, and irreligion;—where he not only saw these things, but, what most grieved him, where he found himself utterly unable to oppose them; for he had neither authority, nor, as he thought, talents to reclaim the great. He left the court, therefore, and entered immediately upon the duties of his parish; hoping to be of some use in the world, by faithfully exerting in a private station such abilities as God had given him.

His behaviour was suitable to his resolutions. He thoroughly considered the office of a clergyman ; and discharged it in the most conscientious manner. Nor was he satisfied with discharging it in his own parish, but extended his labours throughout the country where he observed the pastoral care most neglected ; having for this purpose obtained a general license from the university of Cambridge.

His preaching, which was in a strain wholly different from the preaching of the times, soon made him acceptable to the people ; among whom, in a little time, he established himself in great credit. He was treated, likewise, very civilly by the neighbouring gentry ; and at Bristol, where he often preached, he was countenanced by the magistrates.

The reputation he was thus daily gaining presently alarmed the orthodox clergy in those parts. Their opposition to him appeared first on this occasion. The mayor of Bristol had appointed him to preach on Easter Sunday. Public notice had been given, and all people were pleased ; when, suddenly, there came out an order from the bishop of Bristol, prohibiting any one to preach there without his license. The clergy of the place waited upon Mr. Latimer, informed him of the bishop's order ; and, knowing that he had no such license, were extremely sorry that they were by that means deprived of the pleasure of hearing an excellent discourse from him. Mr. Latimer received their civility with a smile ; for he had been apprized of the affair.

and well knew that these were the very persons who had written to the bishop against him.

Their opposition to him became afterward more public. Some of them ascended the pulpit, and inveighed against him with great indecency of language. Of these the most forward was one Hubberdin, an empty, impudent fellow, who could say nothing of his own, but any thing that was put into his mouth. Through this instrument, and others of the same kind, such liberties were taken with Mr. Latimer's character, that he thought it proper at length to justify himself; and, accordingly, called upon his maligners to accuse him publicly before the mayor of Bristol. But when that magistrate convened both parties, and put the accusers upon producing legal proof of what they had said, nothing appeared; but the whole accusation was left to rest upon the uncertain evidence of some hearsay information.

His enemies, however, were not thus silenced. The party against him became daily stronger and more inflamed. It consisted chiefly of the country priests of those parts, headed by some divines of more eminence.

These persons, after mature deliberation, drew up articles against him, extracted chiefly from his sermons; in which he was charged with speaking lightly of the worship of saints; with saying, that there was no material fire in hell, and that he would rather be in purgatory than in Lollard's tower. These articles, in the form of an accusation, were laid before Stokesly,

bishop of London; who cited Mr. Latimer to appear before him. But Mr. Latimer, instead of obeying the citation, appealed to his own ordinary; thinking himself wholly exempt from the jurisdiction of any other bishop. Stokesly, upon this, making a private cause of it, was determined at any rate to get him in his power. He applied, therefore, to Archbishop Warham, whose zeal was nearly of a temper with his own. The archbishop, being easily persuaded, cited Mr. Latimer to appear in the consistorial court of the province; where the bishop of London, and some other bishops, were commissioned to examine him. An archiepiscopal citation brought Mr. Latimer at once to a compliance. His friends would have had him leave the country, but their persuasions were in vain. Before he set out for London, he wrote the following letter to a friend:—

“I MARVEL not a little, that my lord of London, having so large a diocess committed to his care, and so peopled as it is, can have leisure either to trouble me, or to trouble himself with me, so poor a wretch, a stranger to him, and nothing pertaining to his cure. Methinks it were more comely for my lord, if it were comely for me to say so, to be a preacher himself, than to be a disquieter of preachers. If it would please his lordship to take so great labour and pain as to come and preach in my little bishopric at Westkington, whether I were present or absent, I would thank his lordship heartily for helping to discharge me in my cure, as long as

his predication was fruitful, and to the edification of my parishioners. But he may do as he pleaseth; I pray God he may do as well as I would wish him to do: and, as to my preaching, I trust in God, my lord of London cannot justly reprove it, if it be taken as I spake it; else, it is not my preaching.

*Quem recitas meus est, O Fidentine, libellus;
Sed malè cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.*

Either my lord of London will judge mine outward man, or mine inward man. If he will have to do only with mine outward man, how I have ordered my life, I trust I shall please both my Lord God, and also my lord of London; for I have taught but according to the Scriptures, and the ancient interpreters of Scriptures, and with all diligence moved my auditors to faith and charity; and as for voluntary things, I reprovèd the abuse, without condemning the things themselves. But if my lord will needs invade my inward man, and break violently into my heart, I fear then, indeed, I may displease my lord of London. Finally, as you say, the matter is weighty, even as weighty as my life is worth, and ought to be well looked to: how to look well to it I know not, otherwise than to pray to my Lord God night and day, that as he hath boldened me to preach his truth, so he will strengthen me to suffer for it. And I trust that God will help me; which trust if I had not, the ocean sea should have divided my lord of London and me by this time."

In this Christian temper Mr. Latimer set out for London. It was in the depth of winter, and he was at this time labouring under a severe fit both of the stone and colic. These things were hard upon him; but what most distressed him was, the thought of leaving his parish so exposed, where the popish clergy would not fail to undo, in his absence, what he had hitherto done.

When he arrived in London, he found a court of bishops and canonists assembled to receive him; where, instead of being examined, as he expected, about his sermons, the following paper was offered to him, which he was ordered to subscribe:—

“ I BELIEVE that there is a purgatory to purge the souls of the dead after this life; that the souls in purgatory are holpen with the masses, prayers, and alms of the living; that the saints do pray as mediators for us in heaven; that it is profitable for Christians to call upon the saints, that they may pray as mediators for us unto God; that pilgrimages and oblations done to the sepulchres and relics of saints are meritorious; that they which have vowed perpetual chastity may not break their vow, without the dispensation of the pope; that the keys of binding and loosing delivered to Peter do still remain with the bishops of Rome, his successors, although they live wickedly, and are by no means, nor at any time, committed to laymen; that men may merit at God's hand by fasting, prayer, and other works of piety; that they which are forbidden of the bishop to preach, as

suspected persons, ought to cease until they have purged themselves before the said bishop; that the fast which is used in lent, and other fasts prescribed by the canons, are to be observed; that God, in every one of the seven sacraments, giveth grace to a man rightly receiving the same; that consecrations, sanctifyings, and blessings, by custom received into the church, are profitable; that it is laudable and profitable that the venerable images of the crucifix, and other saints, should be had in the church as a remembrance, and to the honour and worship of Jesus Christ and his saints; that it is laudable and profitable to deck and clothe those images, and to set up burning lights before them, to the honour of the said saints."

This paper being offered to Mr. Latimer, he read it over, and returned it again, refusing to sign it. The archbishop, with a frown, begged he would consider what he did. "We intend not," says he, "Mr. Latimer, to be hard upon you: we dismiss you for the present: take a copy of the articles; examine them carefully; and God grant, that at our next meeting we may find each other in better temper."

At the next meeting, and at several others, the same scene was acted over again; both sides continued inflexible.

The bishops, however, being determined, if possible, to make him comply, began to treat him with more severity. Of one of these examinations he gives us the following account:

"I was brought out," says he, "to be examined in a chamber, where I was wont to be examined; but at this time it was somewhat altered. For, whereas, before there was a fire in the chimney, now the fire was taken away, and an arras hanged over the chimney; and the table stood near the chimney's end. There was among these bishops that examined me, one with whom I have been very familiar, and whom I took for my great friend, an aged man, and he sat next the table end. Then among other questions he put forth one, a very subtle and crafty one; and when I should make answer, 'I pray you, Mr. Latimer,' said he, 'speak out, I am very thick of hearing, and here be many that sit far off.' I marvelled at this, that I was bidden to speak out, and began to misdeem, and gave an ear to the chimney, and there I heard a pen plainly scratching behind the cloth. They had appointed one there to write all my answers, that I should not start from them. God was my good Lord, and gave me answers; I could never else have escaped them."

Thus the bishops continued to distress Mr. Latimer; three times every week they regularly sent for him, with a view either to elicit something from him by captious questions, or to tease him at length into a compliance.

And indeed, at length, he was tired out. His spirit could no longer bear the usage he met with. Accordingly, when he was next summoned, instead of going himself, he sent a letter

to the archbishop, in which, with great freedom, he tells him, that the treatment he had of late met with had fretted him into such a disorder as rendered him unfit to attend them that day : that in the meantime, he could not help taking this opportunity to expostulate with his grace, for detaining him so long from the discharge of his duty : that it seemed to him most unaccountable, that they, who never preached themselves, should hinder others : that as for their examination of him, he really could not imagine what they aimed at ; they pretended one thing in the beginning, and another in the progress : that if his sermons were what gave offence, which he persuaded himself were neither contrary to the truth, nor to any canon of the church, he was ready to answer whatever might be thought exceptionable in them : that he wished a little more regard might be had to the judgment of the people ; and that a distinction might be made between the ordinances of God and the ordinances of man : that if some abuses in religion did prevail, (as was then commonly supposed,) he thought preaching was the best means to discountenance them : that he wished all pastors might be obliged to perform their duty ; but that, however, liberty might be given to those who were willing : that as for the articles proposed to him, he begged to be excused from subscribing them ; while he lived he never would abet superstition : and that, lastly, he hoped the archbishop would excuse what he had written ; he knew his duty

to his superiors, and would practise it; but, in that case, he thought a stronger obligation lay upon him.

What particular effect this letter produced, we are not informed; the bishops, however, still continued their persecution. But by an unexpected accident their schemes were suddenly frustrated. The king, being informed of the ill usage Mr. Latimer met with, most probably by the Lord Cromwell's means, interposed in his behalf, and rescued him out of the hands of his enemies. Mr. Fox leaves it in doubt, whether he was not at length prevailed on to subscribe the bishop's articles; but I think it past dispute that he did not: for if he had, what occasion had the king to interpose?

The unfortunate Ann Boleyn was at that time the favourite wife of Henry. She had imbibed from her youth the principles of the Reformation, and continued still inclined to it. Whether she had been acquainted with Mr. Latimer before she met with him now at court, does not appear; she was extremely taken, however, with his simplicity and apostolic appearance; and mentioned him to her friends as a person, in her opinion, as well qualified as any she had seen to forward the Reformation. One of her friends, and as much her favourite as any, was the Lord Cromwell, who failed not, with his usual address, to raise Mr. Latimer still higher in her esteem. In short, the queen and the minister agreed in thinking that he was a man endowed with too many public vir-

tues to be suffered to live obscure in a private station; and joined in an earnest recommendation of him to the king, for a bishopric. Such suitors would have carried a harder point; nor indeed did the king want much solicitation in his favour.

It happened that the sees of Worcester and Salisbury were at that time vacant by the deprivation of Ghinuccii and Campegio, two Italian bishops, who fell under the king's displeasure upon his rupture with Rome. The former of these was offered to Mr. Latimer. As he had been at no pains to procure this promotion, he looked upon it as the work of Providence, and accepted it without much persuasion. Indeed, he had met with so very rough a check already as a private clergyman, and saw before him so hazardous a prospect in his old station, that he thought it necessary both for his own safety, and for the sake of being of more service in the world, to shroud himself under a little temporal power.

How he discharged his new office may easily be imagined. An honest conscience, which was his rule of conduct in one station, might be supposed such in another. But we are not left to conjecture. All the historians of these times mention him as a person remarkably zealous in the discharge of his duty. In overlooking the clergy of his diocess, which he thought the chief branch of the episcopal office, exciting in them a zeal for religion, and obliging them at least to a legal performance of their

duty, he was uncommonly active, warm, and resolute. With the same spirit he presided over his ecclesiastical court; and either rooted out such crimes as were there cognizable, or prevented their becoming exemplary, by forcing them into corners. In visiting, he was frequent and observant; in ordaining, strict and wary; in preaching, indefatigable; in reproving and exhorting, severe and persuasive.

Thus far he could act with authority; but in other things he found himself under difficulties. The ceremonies of the popish worship gave him great offence; and he neither durst, in times so dangerous and unsettled, lay them entirely aside; nor, on the other hand, was he willing entirely to retain them. In this dilemma his address was admirable. He inquired into their origin; and when he found any of them, as some of them were, derived from a good meaning, he took care to inculcate the original meaning, though itself a corruption, in the room of a more corrupt practice. Thus he put the people in mind, when holy bread and water were distributed, that these elements which had long been thought endowed with a kind of magical influence, were nothing more than appendages to the two sacraments of the Lord's supper and baptism: the former, he said, reminded us of Christ's death, and the latter was only a simple representation of our being purified from sin. By thus reducing popery to its original principles, he at least lopped off a few of its most offensive corruptions.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE his endeavours were thus confined within his own diocess, he was called upon to exert them in a more public manner; having received a summons to attend the parliament and convocation.

This session, which was in the year 1536, was thought a crisis by the Protestant party. The renunciation of the pope's authority was a great step: a free inquiry into principles and practices, it was hoped, would follow; and a thorough reformation could not then, it was thought, be at a great distance.

On the other hand, the papists well knew the king's attachment to popery; and though they never imagined they should be able to close the breach, they were sanguine enough to believe they could prevent its widening further.

These opposite hopes animated two powerful parties; and, indeed, it is hard to say, whether the papists or the Protestants, during this reign, had the greater influence. Henry was governed entirely by his passions; and to these sometimes one minister, and sometimes another, made the most dexterous address.

At the head of the Protestant party was the Lord Cromwell, whose favour with the king was now in its meridian, and who was the soul of every thing that was done.

Next to him in power was Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury; to which dignity he had

been raised on the death of Warham, for his services in the matter of the divorce. He was a sincere promoter of reformation, and had abilities admirably adapted to such a work. He was a calm, dispassionate man; had a sound judgment, and a very extensive knowledge; but he had conversed little in the world, was very open to the attacks of malice and knavery, and was unacquainted with any methods but those of gentleness and persuasion, which indeed went a considerable way to promote his ends.

After him the bishop of Worcester was the most considerable man of the party; to whom were added the bishops of Ely, Rochester, Hereford, Salisbury, and St. David's.

On the other hand, the popish party was headed by Lee, archbishop of York, Gardiner, Stokesly, and Tunstal, bishops of Winchester, London, and Durham.

Lee was considerable chiefly on account of the eminency of his station; Gardiner had the acutest parts; Stokesly, the most zeal; and Tunstal, the best heart. But they were all a kind of court barometers; and discerning men could judge of the temper of the times by their elevations and depressions: yet Gardiner was a dexterous whisperer, when he could get privately to his sovereign's ear; to which he had but too frequent access; though his abilities had not yet that scope which succeeding times allowed them.

These persons, thus disposed, now met to-

gether in convocation. Their meeting was opened, in the usual form, by a sermon, or rather an oration, spoken by the bishop of Worcester, whose eloquence was at this time everywhere famous. This task was assigned him by the archbishop of Canterbury, who knew no man so well qualified to lay before the clergy the corruptions of their order, and to rouse them, if possible, into a sense of their duty. What he said was to this effect:—

“ We are met together, it seems, here, brethren, to consult the settlement of religion. A very important trust is committed to us; and I hope each of us hath brought with him a resolution to discharge it properly. And, indeed, great need is there that something should be done. Superstition hath had a long reign among us; nor can I yet believe its tyranny at an end, while I see our clergy still immersed in the corruptions of their forefathers; while I see even mitred advocates, it becomes me to speak plainly, still espousing this cause. What an inundation of folly, to give it the lightest appellation, is daily flowing from our pulpits! Is there an absurdity in the whole popish creed, is there a corruption in their whole ritual, which is not countenanced even at this very day among us? Purgatory is still believed; images are still worshipped. And, what is most grievous, when external observances abound, men begin to lay a stress upon them; and of course, the necessity of a holy life is superseded. Rouse yourselves, my brethren, rouse yourselves

at these things. Consider that an amendment of all these evils is looked for at our hands. If the priest is remiss, what can be expected from the people? Imagine you hear, at the last day, the Almighty Judge thus rebuking us: 'A cry against you cometh up into my ears; a cry against your avarice, your exactions, your tyranny. I commanded you with industry and pains-taking to feed my sheep: instead of which, you do nothing but gluttonize from day to day, wallowing in indolence and pleasure. I commanded you to preach my commandments, and seek my glory; instead of which, you preach your own phantasies, and seek your own profit. I commanded that all people should diligently search my word; instead of which, it is your care to shut up the books of knowledge. Too much reason have you to fear, that, reading, the people may understand, and, understanding, they may learn to rebuke your slothfulness.'

"Since then, my brethren, the corruptions of the clergy are so manifest, and since so strict an account will be demanded of our conduct, let us at this time do something to show that we have the interest of religion at heart. Let us do something to wipe off prejudices, which I know have been conceived against some of us without doors. And as our stations in life add a dignity to our characters, so let them inspire us with holiness, and a zeal for the salvation of souls; in which, alone, consists the real dignity of a Christian bishop. All men know that we are here assembled; and, with ardent looks,

expect the fruit of our consultation. O! my brethren, let us not disappoint their hopes.

“Lift up your heads, therefore, my lords, look round, and examine what things want reformation in the Church of England. Is it so hard a matter to find out corruption and abuses among us? What is done in the arches? Is there nothing there that wants amendment? Is business speedily despatched? Or are suitors entangled in forms, disappointed, vexed, and rifled? Or, if all things be well there, what think you of the bishops’ consistories? Is sin sought out and corrected? Or is it made a shameful handle for bribery and extortion?

“What think you, my brethren, of the ceremonies of the church? Are they simple and significant? Or are they rather calculated to offend weak consciences, and to encourage superstition among the vulgar?

“Do you see nothing amiss in that multiplicity of holidays with which our calendar abounds? Is true religion, think you, more promoted by them, or idleness and debauchery?

“What think you of images and relics, to which so many painful pilgrimages are made from every corner of the kingdom? Do you observe no priestcraft in these things, no gainful frauds, no profitable impositions?

“What think you of our liturgy? Is it unexceptionable in all its parts? Or, if it was, is it defensible by Scripture that the offices of the church should be performed in an unknown tongue?

“Lastly, my brethren, what think you of masses, and of that beneficial commerce in this commodity, which has been carried on for so many years ?

“Consider these things, I beg of you, my lords ; and if there be nothing to be corrected abroad, let each of us make one better. If there be nothing either abroad or at home that wants amendment, be cheerful, my lords, and merry ; and, as we have nothing else to do, let us at least reason the matter how we may grow richer ; let us fall to some pleasant conversation, and then go home with a full resolution to live merrily here, for we have nothing to expect hereafter. Let us not say, with St. Peter, ‘Our end approacheth :’ this is a melancholy note. But let us say, with the evil servant, ‘My lord delayeth his coming ;’ and let us begin to beat our fellows, and eat and drink with the drunken. And what can be interpreted ‘beating our fellows,’ if not allowing their corruptions ? What can be interpreted ‘eating and drinking with the drunken,’ if not spending our lives in indolence and pleasure ? But God will come on a day when we look not for him, and in an hour when we are not aware. He will call us to a severe account, and all our worldly policy will end in despair.

“Let us, then, my brethren, in time be wise : let us be wise, if not for others, at least for ourselves. Let us wean our hearts from worldly things. Let us divest ourselves of each self-interested thought ; and let every man in this

assembly resolve to aim at nothing in his counsels, but the glory of God and the happiness of man."

With such language did the good bishop endeavour to work upon the assembly. But he harangued in vain. His speech only showed the goodness of his own heart. Eloquence may have influence in questions of sudden determination; but it is not a weapon to oppose rooted prejudices.

The forms of the convocation were scarce settled, when the two parties began to attack each other with great bitterness. The papist was the aggressor. In the lower house a bill was drawn up, the result of much secret cabaling, which contained a catalogue of sixty-seven heretical opinions. Many of these were the tenets of Wicliffe; the rest of modern reformers. This bill was sent to the upper house, where it met with many zealous advocates. Here it was agitated with animosity on both sides; each party resolving in the first contest to make the other acquainted with its full strength.

In the midst of the debate, which had now lasted many days, each day growing warmer than the last, the Lord Cromwell entered the house; and, addressing himself to the popish bishops, required them, in the king's name, to put an end to their opposition. This message instantly quenched the flame, and gave the reformers the first intimation of the king's good intentions toward them.

Among other foreign Protestants who were at this time entertained by the archbishop of Canterbury, there was a very ingenious Scotsman, whose name was Alesse; a person who had made himself very acceptable to the archbishop by his learning and solid judgment; and who was at all times, without any reserve, consulted by the heads of the Protestant party.

This learned man was brought by Cromwell to the convocation-house, where he spoke largely against the sacraments of the Roman Church; and proved that two only were of gospel institution. His speech produced a warm debate, and of long continuance. It was managed by the bishops of York and London on the part of the papists; and of Canterbury and Hereford on that of the Protestants; the latter retorting many things with great freedom against tradition, and monkery, and the ignorance of the popish clergy.

The result was a kind of compromise. Four sacraments, out of the seven, were excluded.

But as the bishop of Worcester did not distinguish himself in the debates on this convocation, for debating was not his talent, it is beside my purpose to enter into a detail of the several transactions of it. I shall only add, that an animated attempt was at this time made to get him and Cranmer stigmatized by some public censure; but, through their own and Cromwell's interest, they were too well established to fear any open attack from their enemies.

For the rest of what was now done, let it

suffice to say, that no very hasty steps were taken in favour of reformation: the cool heads which managed that revolution thought it sufficient, at this time, to accustom the people to see religious matters brought into question; and judged it more prudent to loosen prejudices by degrees, than to attempt, in a violent manner, to root them up.

When it was imagined that these alterations were tolerably digested, others, and these still more subversive of popery, were, the same year, published in the king's name; the first act of pure supremacy which this prince attempted. The articles which contained these alterations were drawn up, as is generally supposed, by the archbishop of Canterbury; and if so, it is more than probable that Bishop Latimer had a hand in them. They were levelled chiefly against relics, images, pilgrimages, and superfluous holidays.

In a few months after this a still more considerable advance was made. The Bible was translated into English, and recommended to a general perusal; the people were ordered to be instructed in the principles of religion in their mother tongue; and the invocation of saints was left as a thing indifferent.

Thus reformation was daily gaining ground. The more glaring parts of the Romish superstition were now abolished; a way was opened for free inquiry; men ventured to harbour doubts and suspicions; and it was thought rational to bring the doctrines of the church to the test of reason.

As for the papists, they gave up every thing for lost. They had made their last effort by exciting the people to rebellion, exclaiming loudly against the dissolution of monasteries; which was, indeed, the most unpopular act of those times. But the flames which they had blown up were now everywhere dying away; the country, enriched with the spoils of the priests, grew plentiful and satisfied; and men began to view the venerable ruins of an abbey, only as they contributed to enliven a landscape.

In the meanwhile, the bishop of Worcester, highly satisfied with the prospect of the times, repaired to his diocess; having made no longer stay in London than was absolutely necessary. He had no talents, and he knew that he had none, for state affairs; and therefore he meddled not with them. The settlement of religion could not, he assured himself, be in abler hands than in those of the Lord Cromwell and the archbishop of Canterbury; and while it was so, he wisely judged it would be thought presumption in him, who could not be supposed to know what men and times would bear, to concern himself with it.

His talents were those of a private station; and within that he was determined to confine them. If he behaved in his diocess like a true Christian bishop, and did all in his power to root out superstition, and encourage the practice of piety and virtue, he was satisfied in his conscience that he did all toward the settlement of religion that could be expected from him. I

make these remarks the rather because Bishop Burnet speaks in a very slight manner of his public character at this time; whereas, it is certain that he never desired to appear in any public character at all. His whole ambition was to discharge the pastoral functions of a bishop; neither aiming to display the abilities of the statesman nor of the courtier. How very unqualified he was to support the latter of these characters will sufficiently appear from the following story.

It was the custom in those days for the bishops, upon the coming in of the new year, to make presents to the king; and many of them would present very liberally, proportioning their gifts to their expectances. Among the rest, the bishop of Worcester, being at this time in town, waited upon the king with his offering; but instead of a purse of gold, which was the common oblation, he presented a New Testament with a leaf doubled down in a very conspicuous manner, to this passage, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

The bishop of Worcester, being again settled in his diocese, went on with his usual application in the discharge of his duty. But I meet with no particulars of his behaviour at this time, except only in one instance.

A gentleman of Warwickshire, in a purchase, had done some hard things to a poor man in his neighbourhood; yet he had kept within the limits of the law, taking the advantage of some unguarded expression in a statute. In this

matter he was assisted by a brother, a justice of the peace, who was enough acquainted with the law to do mischief, and who had chiefly negotiated the affair. As these two brothers were men of great fortune in the country, and overawed the neighbouring gentlemen, the poor man had nothing to do but to sit quietly under his oppression. But while he was reconciling himself to what had happened, some of his friends put him upon applying, in the way of a complaint, to the bishop of Worcester; whose character, as the common patron of the poor and oppressed, was everywhere much spoken of. The poor man approved the advice, and taking a journey to the bishop, acquainted him with the whole affair. The bishop heard his story, pitied his case, and sent him home with a promise of his protection. Accordingly, he soon after wrote to the justice, who had appeared in the affair, and endeavoured by proper arguments to raise in him a sense of the injury he had been guilty of; speaking his mind very freely both of him and his brother, yet treating them at the same time with proper civility. The two gentlemen were greatly incensed at this letter, and answered it in the spirit of detected guilt:—"They had done only what was right, and would abide by it; that as for the sufferer, the law was open; and as for him, they could not but think he interfered very impertinently in an affair which did not concern him." But in the bishop of Worcester they had not to do with a person who was easily shaken

from an honest purpose. He acquainted them in few words, that if the cause of his complaint was not forthwith removed, he would certainly himself lay the whole affair before the king. And he had been, without doubt, as good as his word; but his adversaries did not care to put him to a trial.

Having now been about two years resident in his diocess, he was called up again to town in the year 1539, to attend the business of parliament; a parliament which was productive of great events. But as a new spirit had now infused itself into the counsels of those times, it will be necessary to trace it from its first efforts into those violent workings and agitations which it soon produced.

CHAPTER VI.

KING Henry VIII. made as little use of a good judgment as any man ever did. He had no fixed principles; his whole reign was one continued rotation of violent passions; through the means of which secret springs he was all his life a mere machine in the hands of his ministers; and he among them who could make the most artful address to the passion of the day carried his point.

Gardiner was just returned from Germany; having successfully negotiated some commissions which the king had greatly at heart. This introduced him with a good grace at court;

where, observing, with his usual sagacity, the temper and situation of men and things, and finding that room was left him to infuse new counsels by the death of the queen, who exceedingly favoured the Protestant interest, he collected every art he was master of, and with the subtlety of a bad spirit, beset the king, hoping, in some weak part, to infuse his designs under the semblance of state policy.

It was imagined by many at that time, and hath since that time been confirmed by circumstances which came out afterward, that Gardiner had begun thus early to entertain very ambitious designs ; that he had been in treaty with the pope ; and that, for expected favours, he was under secret engagements with him to introduce popery again into England.

With this view, therefore, he took frequent occasions to alarm the king with apprehensions of foreign and domestic danger. He would dwell upon the intrigues of the court of Rome, the power of the emperor, the watchfulness of the Scots to take every advantage, and, above all, the seditious spirit of his own subjects. He would then insinuate that something should be done in opposition to these threatening dangers ; and that, for his own part, he knew nothing that could be more effectual than for his majesty to show a zeal for the old religion. That as for his throwing off the papal yoke, he said it was a noble effort of his magnanimity, and was esteemed such by all sober men ; for the tyranny of the court of Rome was become intolerable.

The suppression of monasteries was likewise, in his opinion, wholly justifiable ; and his majesty well knew that none of his counsellors had been more sanguine in that affair than himself. But then he thought it was the part of wisdom to consider these things only in a political light ; and, for himself, he could not but greatly apprehend the bad consequences of making any alterations in the established religion. At least, he would advise his majesty to stop where he was, and by some vigorous act to show the world that he was not that patron of novel opinions which he was generally esteemed. By such a step he would make those only his enemies who were blind devotees to the papal power ; and these were not one-fourth part of Christendom.

By such infusions as these, which he knew very well how to dress into the form of arguments, and could render plausible by an artful display of the situation of Europe, and by showing how the interests of courts and factions coincided entirely with his schemes, the wily prelate so wrought upon the suspicion, the ambition, or the vanity of the king, (for he could show his arguments in all lights,) that by degrees he drew attention, and at length made such an impression as he thought would serve his purpose. Having gone thus far, he next began to propose expedients : and, as the king was about to call a parliament at this time to confirm and finish what he had done with relation to monasteries, he persuaded him to take

this opportunity of doing something in the business he had counselled. In the meantime, nothing of these designs transpired; at least, so little, that the opposite party could make no use of their intelligence; for of all the wicked ministers that have infested the councils of princes, perhaps none was ever more deep and secret than the bishop of Winchester. This was the state of affairs when the bishop of Worcester was called up to London, to attend the business of parliament.

Soon after his arrival in town, he was accused before the king of preaching a seditious sermon. The sermon was preached at court; and the preacher, according to his custom, had been unquestionably severe enough against whatever he observed amiss. His accuser, who is said to have been a person of great eminence about the king, was most probably the bishop of Winchester; for this prelate was known to make use of what arts he could to remove all those from the national councils of those times who were most likely to thwart his measures. The king had called together several of the bishops with a view to consult them upon some points of religion. When they had all given their opinions, and were about to be dismissed, the bishop of Winchester, if it was he, kneeled down before the king, and accused the bishop of Worcester in the above-mentioned manner; showing how his sermon, which he called a libel against the king and his ministers, tended to alienate the people from their prince. The

bishop, being called upon by the king, with some sternness, to vindicate himself, was so far from denying, or even palliating, what he had said, that he boldly justified it; and, turning to the king with that noble unconcern which a good conscience inspires, made this answer,—“I never thought myself worthy, nor I never sued, to be a preacher before your grace; but I was called to it, and would be willing, if you mislike me, to give place to my betters; for I grant there be a great many more worthy of the room than I am. And if it be your grace’s pleasure to allow them for preachers, I could be content to bear their books after them. But if your grace allow me for a preacher, I would desire you to give me leave to discharge my conscience, and to frame my doctrine according to my audience. I had been a very dolt indeed, to have preached so at the borders of your realm as I preach before your grace.” The greatness of this answer baffled his accuser’s malice; the severity of the king’s countenance changed into a gracious smile; and the bishop was dismissed with that obliging freedom which this monarch never used but to those whom he esteemed.

The parliament which had been summoned to meet on the 28th of April, having now sat a week, the lord chancellor, on the 5th of May, informed the lords from the king, that his majesty had, with extreme uneasiness, observed the distracted condition of his subjects with regard to religion; that he had nothing so much at heart, as to establish a uniformity of opinion

among them; and that he therefore desired the lords would immediately appoint a committee to examine the several opinions that prevailed, and to fix upon certain articles for a general agreement. It was the manner, it seems, of those times, to use no ceremony in fixing a standard for men to think by, and to vary that standard with as little ceremony as new modes of thinking prevailed. The parliament, therefore, without any difficulty, complied; and named, for a committee, the Lord Cromwell, the two archbishops, and the bishops of Worcester, Ely, Durham, Bath and Wells, Carlisle, and Bangor.

Men of so opposite a way of thinking were not likely to agree. After eleven days, therefore, spent in warm debates, nothing was concluded. This was no more than was expected, and made room for the farce which followed.

On the twelfth day, the duke of Norfolk, according to the plan which had been laid down, acquainted the lords, that he found the committee had yet done nothing, that eleven days had been already spent in wrangling, and that he saw no possibility of coming to an agreement in that way. He begged leave, therefore, to offer to their lordships' consideration some articles which he himself had drawn up, and which he desired might be examined by a committee of the whole house. He then read the articles, which were these:—

1. That in the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, there remained no substance

of bread and wine, but the natural body and blood of Christ.

2. That vows of chastity ought to be observed.

3. That the use of private masses should be continued.

4. That communion in both kinds was not necessary.

5. That priests might not marry.

6. That auricular confession should be retained in the church.

The first of these articles was against the sacramentaries, as they were called, who denied transubstantiation. The second was designed to keep the ejected clergy dependant on the pope; for Gardiner could not hope at this time to establish them. The rest were opinions of the greatest weight in popery.

The Protestant party began now plainly enough to see a concerted scheme; and could trace it, without much difficulty, to its source. They resolved, however, to collect what strength they were able, and at least to make one struggle. Each of them, therefore, did the utmost he could. But the noble stand made by the archbishop of Canterbury deserves particularly to be remembered. This prelate disputed, in the military phrase, every inch of ground; and with such force of reason, that if reason had been his adversaries' weapon too, he had carried his point.

Against the first article, indeed, he said nothing; for at that time he held all the opinions of the Lutherans; among which, transubstantiation was one. But against the second

he was extremely earnest. It was very hard, he said, to force religious men from their houses, and not allow them that common intercourse with the world, which the rest of his majesty's subjects enjoyed; that the parliament had already absolved them from their vow of poverty, and he could see no reason why they should be absolved from one vow more than another: besides, he added, that, in his opinion, such a treatment of them was very impolitic; for while they continued in a state of celibacy, they were still in a capacity, if a fair occasion should offer, to re-enter their monasteries.

Against the third article, which enjoined the use of private masses, he said it was a plain condemnation of the king's proceedings against religious houses; for if masses did benefit departed souls, it was surely an unjustifiable step to destroy so many noble foundations which were dedicated to that only purpose.

With equal spirit the archbishop opposed the rest of the articles. But all his eloquence was ineffectual: the affair had been resolved in the cabinet; and the parliament was consulted only for form. The act, therefore, passed without much opposition, and was guarded with such penalties as made it indeed justly dreadful.

The act of the Six Articles (for so it was named) was no sooner published, than it gave an universal alarm to all the favourers of reformation. The Protestants everywhere cried out, their prospect of happiness was now over; they could not now expect a toleration, for they

plainly saw that a sword was put into the hands of their enemies to destroy them : while both papists and Protestants joined in exclaiming that it was difficult to say what the king intended ; for it was neither safe to be of one profession nor the other ; the act of Supremacy condemned the papist, and the act of the Six Articles, the Protestant.

The bishop of Worcester was among those who first took offence at these proceedings ; and as he could not give his vote for the act, he thought it wrong to hold any office in a church where such terms of communion were required. He resigned his bishopric, therefore, and retired into the country.

It is related of him, that when he came from the parliament-house to his lodgings, he threw off his robes, and, leaping up, declared to those who stood about him, that he thought himself lighter than ever he found himself before. The story is not unlikely, as it is much in character ; a vein of pleasantry and good humour accompanying the most serious actions of his life.

In the meantime vigilant emissaries were sent abroad. Articles of accusation were gathered from all parts ; and, in London only, more than five hundred persons, in a very short time, were imprisoned. Cromwell and Cranmer saw with concern the misery of the times, but could not prevent it : they stood alone, and were, besides, enough engaged in stemming a torrent which ran strong against themselves. Cromwell was almost borne down, though his

enemies carried on their designs with great secrecy. As for Cranmer, more than one open attempt had been made against him; but his sovereign's favour sheltered him; and, indeed, King Henry's care for this excellent prelate, to the end of his reign, is almost the only striking instance we have either of his steadiness or of his good nature.

During the heat of this persecution, Bishop Latimer resided in the country, where he thought of nothing for the remainder of his days but a sequestered life. He knew the storm which was up could not soon be appeased; and he had no inclination to trust himself in it. But in the midst of his security, an unhappy accident carried him again into the tempestuous weather that was abroad. He received a bruise by the fall of a tree; and the contusion was so dangerous that he was obliged to seek for better assistance than could be afforded him by the unskilful surgeons of those parts. With this view he repaired to London.

Here he found the prospect still more gloomy; the popish party had now triumphed over all their obstacles; and he had the mortification to see his great patron, the Lord Cromwell, in the hands of his enemies.

Of all the severe acts of that reign, the dissolution of monasteries gave most offence. The clamours of the expelled religious were still loud and menacing; and these clamours were with great assiduity carried to the ears of the king, where they were represented as the effects

of a general seditious spirit, capable of breaking out into any rebellious act. This industry, in showing the king the odiousness of his government, was used to blacken Cromwell, who was the chief agent in the suppression of the religious houses, and had, indeed, been more instrumental than any other man in detecting the impostures of the popish clergy, who were universally incensed against him. The king listened with a cruel attention to these whispers against his minister, and thought it no ill policy to make him the scape-goat of his own offences.

Other causes, no doubt, conspired in the ruin of this great patriot; and historians guess at many; but the truth is, this affair, as well as many others which were directed by the dark counsels of the bishop of Winchester, are still involved in the same obscurity. It is certain, however, that, without even the form of a judicial trial, he was condemned to lose his head.

Thus perished this excellent statesman, who was the ornament of the times in which he lived. He had a high sense of public good; a noble, disinterested, and generous heart. His parts were equal to any perplexity of government. Nor was his private character inferior to his public. He was pious and charitable in a great degree; humble, patient of injury, and such an example of gratitude as we seldom meet with. His death was such a stain upon the memory of those times, that, if there had been no other, it had been enough to mark them with infamy.

Upon Cromwell's fall, the persecution against the Protestants broke out in earnest. The duke of Norfolk and the bishop of Winchester, who were the principal instruments in the ruin of the late minister, were now at the head of the popish party; and the authority of the former giving credit to the crafty counsels of the latter, together they had the management of all things in their hands. Under the direction of these zealots, the sword was presently unsheathed; and such a scene of blood was opened as England had not yet seen.

Mr. Latimer, among others, felt the loss of his great patron. Gardiner's emissaries soon found him out in his concealment, for he was still in London; and something that somebody had somewhere heard him say against the Six Articles being alleged against him, he was sent to the tower. Into what particulars his accusation was afterward digested, or whether into any, we meet with no account. It is rather probable that nothing formal was brought against him; for we do not find he was ever judicially examined. He suffered, however, through one pretence or other, a cruel imprisonment during the remainder of King Henry's reign.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the spring of the year 1547 King Henry died, and was succeeded by his son Edward VI. This prince came a minor to the crown

and was left, by his father's will, in the hands of sixteen governors. These were at first equal in power: but dividing, as men commonly do in such circumstances, into factions, the earl of Hertford, the king's uncle, was raised above the rest, with the title of protector of the kingdom. Soon after he was created duke of Somerset. This revolution was matter of great joy to the Protestant party; for the protector was generally known to be a favourer of reformation. He was, besides, a wise and an honest man; and his want of spirit and resolution was thought to be amply recompensed by his moderation and extreme popularity.

As for the young king, he is extolled in history as a miracle of human nature. But though we make allowances for the exaggerated accounts of Protestant writers, whose gratitude may be supposed to have broken out into high strains of encomium, such an assemblage of great and good qualities will still be left him as have seldom discovered themselves in so young a person, and much seldomer in one subject to the temptations of royalty. Among his other virtues, piety was conspicuous. With him the settlement of religion was an end; with his father it had been a means. And as he had been bred up from his infancy either among moderate men or professed Protestants, he had imbibed early prejudices in favour of the reformed doctrines. The protector, therefore, found no obstacle in his designs from the young king.

The Protestant interest was still further strengthened by the addition of Archbishop Cranmer's counsels; which had now all that weight which the protector's authority could give them.

On the other hand, Gardiner, Tunstal, and Bonner, who was now bishop of London, set themselves at the head of the popish party, and opposed the protector as much as they durst: not indeed openly and directly; for they presently observed the turning of the wind, and had shifted their sails with great nimbleness; but, thwarting the means rather than the measures, they opposed him with that plausible dissimulation which men, dexterous in business, can easily assume. Their common language was, that, however necessary these alterations were, they were certainly at this time highly improper; that a minority was not a season for innovations; that it was enough to keep things quiet till the king came of age, and that abuses might then be inquired into, and remedies applied, with all that authority which the full regal power could give.

Their opposition, however, had little effect; and many changes in religion were projected, and some carried into execution, with as much despatch as affairs of such importance would admit. The act of the Six Articles was repealed; images were removed out of churches; the liturgy was amended; and all ministers were confined to their parish churches. This last was an arrangement to prevent the spread-

ing both of popery and sedition ; while special licenses were granted to approved men to preach where they pleased. And what recommended these changes to sober men of all distinctions was, the great moderation and spirit of candour which accompanied them throughout. Two acts of blood, indeed, stand upon record ; a shameful and indelible stain upon the annals of that administration !

At the close of the last chapter we left Mr. Latimer in the tower ; where he had now lived above six years, in the constant practice of every Christian virtue that becomes a suffering state. Immediately upon the change of the government, he, and all others who were imprisoned in the same cause, were set at liberty ; and Bishop Latimer, whose old friends were now in power, was received by them with every mark of affection.

Heath, who had succeeded him in the bishopric of Worcester, observing his credit at court, and fearing lest it should be thought proper to reinstate him, was in a great dilemma how to conduct himself. As he was a man of no principle, he had only to observe the temper of the times, and to manage accordingly. But unhappily, he was as bad a courtier as a bishop. Making false judgments, therefore, and being drawn in by artful men, he applied to the papists instead of the Protestants. His party and his folly—for he was in every respect an insignificant man—laid him so exceedingly open, that Mr. Latimer would have found no

difficulty in dispossessing him. But he had other sentiments : age coming upon him, he thought himself now unequal to the weight of a bishopric, and had no inclination to encumber himself with one. Perhaps, too, he might think there was something of hardship and injustice in the case. Whatever were his reasons, it is certain he would make no suit himself, nor suffer his friends to make any, for his restoration.

But the parliament, which was now sitting, having settled every thing of national concern, and applying itself to private business, sent up an address to the protector, begging him to restore Mr. Latimer to the bishopric of Worcester. The protector was very well inclined to gratify the commons, and proposed the resumption of his bishopric to Mr. Latimer, as a point he had very much at heart : but the other persevered in his negative, alleging his great age, and the claim he had from thence to a private life. The report of the parliament's interposition reaching Heath's ears, terrified him to such a degree, that, taking it for granted his popery had been complained of, he immediately deserted his party, and became an orthodox Protestant. And thus showing a conscientious regard for neither, he became contemptible to both parties.

Mr. Latimer, having rid himself entirely of all entreaty on this head, accepted an invitation from his friend Archbishop Cranmer, and took up his residence at Lambeth ; where he led a

very retired life. I call it retired, because he saw little company, and never interfered in public affairs; though he had always as crowded a levee as a minister of state. His chief employment was to hear the complaints, and to redress the injuries, of the poor people: and his character for services of this kind was so universally known, that strangers from every part of England would resort to him, vexed either by the delays of public courts and offices, which were surely at that time exceedingly out of order; or harassed by the oppressions of the great. "I cannot go to my book," says he, giving an account of these avocations, "for poor folks that come unto me, desiring that I will speak, that their matters may be heard. Now and then I walk in my lord of Canterbury's garden, looking in my book: but I can do but little good at it; for I am no sooner in the garden, and have read a little while, but by and by cometh some one or other knocking at the gate. Anon, cometh my man, and saith, 'Sir, there is one at the gate would speak with you.' When I come there, then it is some one or other that desireth me that I will speak, that his matter may be heard; or that telleth me he hath lain this long time at great cost and charges, or that he cannot once have his matter come to a hearing."

And sure no one was better qualified to undertake the office of redressing injuries: for his free reproofs, joined to the integrity of his life, had a great effect upon those in the highest sta-

tions ; while his own independence, and backwardness in asking any favour for himself, allowed him greater liberty in asking for others.

In these employments he spent more than two years ; interfering as little as possible, during that whole time, in any public transaction : though no doubt, if he had pleased, he might have had great weight, at least in ecclesiastical affairs. But, besides the distrust he had of his own judgment, he was a man of such exactness in his principles and practice, that he could scarce have made those allowances for men and measures which prudent counsellors must make in corrupt times ; and was backward, therefore, in drawing upon himself such engagements as might lead him, more or less, into a deviation from truth. We find him, however, at this time, engaged in assisting Archbishop Cranmer to compose the homilies, which were set forth by authority in the first year of King Edward. A useful work this was ; intended to supply the want of preaching, which was now at a very low ebb.

The clergy of the old persuasion chose to have themselves considered as a sort of factors, who were to transact the spiritual business of the people ; while the people, in the meantime, having paid their agents, had no further concern about their salvation. Thus religion was turned into a trade ; and the priests, having gotten the monopoly of it, maintained themselves in this monopoly by their preaching. Church endowments, private masses, and such gainful topics

were insisted on ; and these things superseded faith and good morals.

This universal corruption in the priesthood was a melancholy prospect to all who wished well to reformation ; and it was the more melancholy, as it was an evil which could not in many years admit a cure. What seemed best, however, was to keep the clergy, as much as possible, out of the pulpits ; and to this end the book of homilies was composed, and put into the hands of all ministers of parishes, who were enjoined by authority to read one every Sunday, instead of preaching. In these homilies the doctrines of Christianity were explained ; the people were shown the insignificance of outward observances, and were taught to believe that their salvation was by grace through faith in Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE have had frequent occasion to consider Mr. Latimer as a preacher ; as, indeed, he was one of the most eloquent and popular of the age in which he lived : but at this time he appeared in that character in a more advantageous light than he had yet done ; having been appointed, during the three first years of King Edward, to preach the lent sermons before the king. The choice of such a preacher was approved by all good men : great irregularities

were known to prevail ; and Mr. Latimer was acknowledged to be as fit a man as any in the nation to detect and censure them.

The court of King Edward VI., and indeed the whole frame of his government, was in as great disorder as almost any court or any government could be in the worst of times. The example of the young king was noble and instructive ; and would by degrees, no doubt, have had its influence ; but as he was yet only a boy, and in the hands of others, he had little weight. Nor was the protector a man qualified to curb licentious spirits. He was of an easy nature ; and though he wished to see things in order, yet he could contribute little more than a good example to keep them so. As the principal springs were thus weak, it is no wonder if the inferior movements were irregular. A minority was thought the season for every one to make his claim ; and such claims were made by all who had any pretensions to court-favours, as equally surprised and scandalized all sober observers. The spoils of a hundred and sixty monasteries, instead of satisfying, had increased the avarice of the courtiers. Having already pruned away all the superfluous parts (and much superfluity there was) from the revenues of the church, they began now to lop off those vital branches which were necessary for its support ; insomuch that there was scarce a benefice in the nation of any considerable value on which some greedy courtier was not pensioned. To this insatiable avarice was added

a licentiousness of manners beyond the example of former times.

A court thus corrupt produced its necessary consequence,—corruption in every order of the state. Never was justice worse administered; never were the dispensers of it more venal. The public offices, too, were equally corrupt; especially those of the revenue, where the most scandalous depredations were made. Nor did the country retain its innocence. Here the gentry practised those arts of avarice and rapine which they had learned at court, and taught the people all those vices to which indigence gives birth. While the clergy, instead of qualifying in some degree this corrupt mass by a mixture of piety and devotion, incorporated with it, and even increased its malignity by an addition of as bad, if not of worse, ingredients.

This was the state of practical religion in the nation, when Mr. Latimer was called to the office of a court preacher. As to his sermons, which are still extant, they are far from being exact pieces of composition. Elegant writing was then little known. Some polite scholars there were,—Cheke, Ascham, and a few others; who, from an acquaintance with classical learning, of which they were the restorers, began to think in a new manner, and could treat a subject with accuracy at least, if not with elegance. But, in general, the writers of that age, and especially the churchmen, were equally incorrect in their composition, and slovenly in their language. We must not, therefore, expect that

Mr. Latimer's discourses will stand a critical inquiry; they are, at best, loose, incoherent pieces; yet his simplicity and low familiarity, his humour and gibing drollery, were well adapted to the times; and his oratory, according to the mode of eloquence at that day, was exceedingly popular. His manner of preaching, too, was very affecting; and no wonder, for he spoke immediately from his heart.

His abilities, however, as an orator, made only the inferior part of his character as a preacher. What particularly recommends him is, that noble and apostolic zeal which he exerts in the cause of truth. And sure no one had a higher sense of what became his office, was less influenced by any sinister motive, or durst with more freedom reprove vice, however dignified by worldly distinctions.

It is in this light, then, in which I would particularly recommend him; and shall, therefore, in the following pages, give the reader some instances, in his own words, of that spirit with which he lashed the courtly vices of his time.

In his first sermon, which is addressed chiefly to the king, he opens his commission:—"The preacher," says he, "cannot correct the king, if he be a transgressor, with the temporal sword, but with the spiritual; fearing no man, setting God only before his eyes, under whom he is a minister to root up vice. Let the preacher, therefore, never fear to declare the message of God. And if the king will not hear,

then let the preacher admonish him, pray for him, and so leave him unto God." He then proceeds to point out to the king his duty in several instances.

In his second sermon he lashes the clergy. "It is a marvel," says he, "if any mischief be in hand, if a priest be not at one end of it. I will be a suitor to your grace, to give your bishops charge ere they go home, upon their allegiance, to look better to their flock. And if they be found negligent, out with them: I require it in God's behalf, make them quondams, all the pack of them. Your majesty hath divers of your chaplains, well learned men, and of good knowledge, to put in their place: and yet you have some that are bad enough, hangers-on of the court; I mean not these. But if your majesty's chaplains, and my lord protector's, be not able to furnish their places, there is in this realm, thanks be to God, a great sight of laymen, well-learned in the Scriptures, and of a virtuous and godly conversation, better learned than a great sight of us the clergy. This I move of conscience to your grace. And let them not only do the function of bishops, but live of the same; and not, as in many places, that one should have the name, and another the profit. What an enormity is this, for a man to serve in a civility, and have the profit of a provostship, and a deanery and a parsonage! But I will tell you what is like to come of it: it will bring the clergy shortly into very slavery. But I fear one thing, that, for saving

a little money, you will put chantry priests into benefices. Christ bought souls with his blood; and will you sell them for gold or silver? I would not have you do with chantry priests as was done with abbots. For when their enormities were first read in the parliament, they were so abominable that there was nothing but, 'Down with them:' but within a while after, the same abbots were made bishops, as there be some of them yet alive, to save their pensions. O Lord! think you that God is a fool, and seeth it not?"

Afterward, warning the king against flatterers, he tells him that God says, If the king shall do his will, he shall reign long, he and his children. "Wherefore," says he, "I would have your grace remember this; and when any of these flatterers and flibber-gibbers another day shall come, and claw you by the back, and say, 'Sir, trouble not yourself; what should you study for? why should you do this or that?' your grace may answer them thus: 'What, sirrah? I perceive you are weary of us. Doth not God say in such a place, that a king should fear God, that he may reign long? I perceive now that thou art a traitor.' Tell him this tale once, and I warrant you he will come no more to you."

He then speaks of the delay of justice, and the abuses in the law. "I hear of many matters," says he, "before my lord protector, and my lord chancellor, that cannot be heard. I must desire my lord protector's grace to hear

me in this matter ; and that your grace would, likewise, hear poor men's suits yourself. Put them to none other to be heard ; let them not be delayed. The saying is now, that money is heard everywhere ; if a man be rich, he shall soon have an end of his matter. Others are fain to go home with tears, for any help they can obtain at any judge's hand. Hear men's suits yourself, I require you, in God's behalf ; and put them not to the hearing of these velvet coats and upskips. Now a man can scarce know them from ancient knights of the country. A gentlewoman came to me, and told me, that a certain great man keepeth some lands of hers from her ; and that in a whole year she could get but one day for the hearing of her matter ; and on that day the great man brought on his side a sight of lawyers for his counsel, and that she had but one man of the law ; and the great man so shakes him, that he cannot tell what to do ; so that when the matter came to the point, the judge was a means to the gentlewoman, that she would let the great man have a quietness in her land. I beseech your grace that you will look to these matters. Hear them yourself. View your judges ; and hear poor men's causes. And you, proud judges, hearken what God saith in his holy book. 'Hear the poor,' saith he, 'as well as the rich.' Mark that saying, thou proud judge. The devil will bring this sentence at the day of doom. Hell will be full of such judges, if they repent not and amend. They are worse than the wicked

judge Christ speaketh of ; for they will neither hear men for God's sake, nor fear of the world, nor importunity, nor any thing else. Yea, some of them will command them to ward, if they be importunate. I heard say, that when a suitor came to one of them, he said, 'What fellow is it that giveth these folks counsel to be so importunate ? He should be committed to ward.' Marry, sir, commit me, then ; it is even I that gave them that counsel. And if you amend not, I will cause them to cry out upon you still, even as long as I live."

In his third sermon he lashes the judges again. "Now-a-days," says he, "the judges are afraid to hear a poor man against the rich : they will either pronounce against him, or drive off the suit, that he shall not be able to go through with it. But the greatest man in the realm cannot so hurt a judge as a poor widow ; such a shrewd turn can she do him. The cries of the poor ascend to heaven, and call down vengeance from God. Cambyzes was a great emperor, such another as our master is : he had many lord presidents, lord deputies, and lieutenants under him. It chanced he had under him in one of his dominions a briber, a gift-taker, a gratifier of rich men. The cry of a poor widow came to the emperor's ears ; upon which he flayed the judge quick, and laid his skin in the chair of judgment ; that all judges that should give judgment afterward should sit in the same skin. Surely it was a goodly sign, the sign of the judge's skin. I pray God we

may once see the sign of the skin in England."

Before he concludes, he speaks of the progress of the Reformation. It was yet, he said, but a mingle-mangle and a hotch-potch. "I cannot tell what," says he, "partly popery and partly true religion, mingled together. They say in my country, when they call their hogs to the swine-trough, 'Come to thy mingle-mangle, come, pur, come.' Even so do they make mingle-mangle of the gospel. They can clatter and prate of it; but when all cometh to all, they joined popery so with it, that they marred all together." In this sermon, too, he inveighs against debasing the coin, and shows the bad consequences of it. The passage is quoted at length by Mr. Folkes, in his treatise upon English coins.

In his fourth sermon, he again taxes the bishops. "'Thou shalt not," says he, addressing himself to the king, "be partaker of other men's sins. So saith St. Paul. And what is it to be a partaker of other men's sins, if it be not so to make unpreaching prelates, and to suffer them to continue still in their unpreaching prelacy. If the king should suffer these things and look through his fingers, and wink at them, should not the king be a partaker of other men's sins? And why? Is he not supreme head of the church? What! Is the supremacy a dignity and nothing else? Is it not accountable? I think verily it will be a chargeable dignity, when account shall be asked of it. If the salt is unsavoury, it is good for nothing. By this

salt is understood preachers. And if it is good for nothing, it should be cast out. Out with them then, cast them out of their office. What should they do with cures that will not look to them? O that a man might have the contemplation of hell; that the devil would allow a man to look into it and see its state, as he showed all the world when he tempted Christ in the wilderness. 'On yonder side,' would the devil say, 'are punished unpreaching prelates.' I think verily a man might see as far as a kenning, as far as from Calais to Dover I warrant you, and see nothing but unpreaching prelates. As for them, I never look to have their good words as long as I live. Yet will I speak of their wickedness, as long as I shall be permitted to speak. No preacher can pass it over in silence. It is the original root of all mischief. As for me, I owe them no other ill-will, but to pray God to amend them. I would have them do their duty. I owe them no other malice than this, and this is none at all."

In his fifth sermon he again lashes the judges and patrons of livings. "If a judge," says he, "should ask me the way to hell, I would show him this way: first, let him be a covetous man; then let him go a little further, and take bribes; and lastly, let him pervert judgment. Lo, here is the mother, and the daughter, and the daughter's daughter. Avarice is the mother; she brings forth bribe-taking, and bribe-taking perverting of judgment. There lacks a fourth thing to make up the mess, which, so God help

me, if I were judge, should be a Tyburn tippet. Were it the judge of the king's bench, my lord chief judge of England, yea, were it my lord chancellor himself, to Tyburn with him! But one will say, peradventure, 'You speak unseemly so to be against the officers for taking of rewards; you consider not the matter to the bottom. Their offices be bought for great sums: now how should they receive their money again, but by bribing? you would not have them undone. Some of them give two hundred pounds, some five hundred, some two thousand; and how can they gather up this money again, but by helping themselves in their office?' And is it so, trow ye? Are civil offices bought for money? Lord God! who would have thought it! O that your grace would seek through your realm for men, meet for offices; yea, and give them liberally for their pains, rather than that they should give money for them. This buying of offices is a making of bribery; for he that buyeth must needs sell. You should seek out for offices wise men, and men of activity, that have stomachs to do their business; not milk-sops; nor white-livered knights; but fearers of God: for he that feareth God will be no briber. But perhaps you will say, 'We touch no bribes.' No, marry; but my mistress, your wife, hath a fine finger; she toucheth it for you; or else you have a servant who will say, 'If you will offer my master a yoke of oxen, you will fare never the worse: but I think my master will not take them.' When he

has offered them to the master, then comes another servant, and says, 'If you will carry them to the clerk of the kitchen, you will be remembered the better.' This is a friarly fashion: they will receive no money in their hands, but will have it put upon their sleeves."

Speaking of venal patrons, he cries out, "O Lord, in what case are we! I marvel the ground gapes not and devours us. Surely, if they used their religion so in Turkey, the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons are charged to see the office done, not to get lucre by his patronship. There was a patron in England, that had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him and brought him thirty apples in a dish, which he gave to his man to carry to his master. Having presented them, he said, 'Sir, such a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good to him for such a benefice.' 'Tush,' quoth he, 'this is no apple matter; I will have none of his apples; I have as good as these in my own orchard.' The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. 'Then,' quoth the priest, 'desire him but to prove one of them for my sake; he shall find them better than they look for.' Upon this, he cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it. 'Marry,' quoth he, 'this is a good apple. The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out, 'They all grow on one tree, I warrant you, sir, and have all one

taste.' 'Well, this is a good fellow ; let him have the benefice,' quoth the patron. Get you but a graft of this tree, and it will serve you in better stead, I warrant you, than all St. Paul's learning. But, let patrons take heed ; for they shall answer for all the souls that perish through their default ; and yet this is taken for a laughing matter. I desire your majesty to remedy these matters, and see redress in this realm in your own person. Although my lord protector, I doubt not, and the rest of the council do, in the meantime, all that lieth in their power to redress things."

He begins his sixth sermon with taxing the fashionable vices of the age. He begins with duelling, and exclaims against the remissness of the law in punishing it. "I do not know," says he, "what you call chance-medley in the law : the law is not my study. I am a scholar in Scripture, in God's book : I study that ; and I know what is murder in the sight of God. I fall out with a man ; he is angry with me, and I with him ; and, lacking opportunity and place, we put it off for that time. In the mean season I prepare my weapon, and sharp it against another time. I swell and boil in my mind against my adversary : I seek him ; we meddle together ; it is my chance, by reason my weapon is better than his, and so forth, to kill him. I give him his death-stroke in my vengeance. This I call voluntary murder from Scripture : what it is in the law I cannot tell. A searcher in London, executing his office, displeased a

merchant. They had words, and the merchant kills him. They that told me this tale say, it is winked at : they look through their fingers, and will not see it. Whether it is taken up with a pardon or not, I know not ; but this I am sure of, that if you bear with such matters, the devil will bear you away to hell. O Lord, what whoredom is used now-a-days ! It is marvel that the earth gapeth not, and swalloweth us up. God hath suffered long of his great mercy ; but he will punish sharply at length, if we do not repent. There are such dicing-houses, also, they say, as have not been wont to be ; where young gentlemen dice away their thrift ; and where dicing is, there are other follies also. For the love of God, let remedy be had. Men of England, in time past, when they would exercise themselves, were wont to go abroad in the fields a-shooting. The art of shooting hath been in times past much esteemed in the realm, in which we excel all other nations. In my time, my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn me any other thing ; and so I think other men did their children. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and to draw, not with strength of arm, as other nations do, but with strength of body. But now we have taken up whoring in towns, instead of shooting in fields. I desire you, my lords, even as you have the honour of God at heart, and intend to remove his indignation, let there be sent forth some proclamation, some sharp proclamation, to the

justices of peace ; for they do not their duty. Justices now be no justices." In the following part of his discourse he ridicules an argument for the pope's supremacy, made use of by Cardinal Pole, in his book against King Henry. "Jesus cometh," saith he, "to Simon's boat ; now come the papists, and they will make a mystery of it : they will pick out the supremacy of the bishop of Rome in Peter's boat. We may make allegories enough of every part of Scripture ; but surely, it must needs be a simple matter that standeth on so weak a ground. If you ask, 'Why to Simon's boat, rather than to any other ?' I will answer as I find by experience in myself. I came hither to-day from Lambeth in a wherry ; and when I came to take my boat, the watermen came about me, as the manner is, and he would have me, and he would have me. I took one of them. Now you will ask me, why I came in that boat rather than any other ? Why, because it was next me, and stood more commodiously for me. And so did Christ by Simon's boat : it stood nearer to him, or mayhap he saw a better seat in it. It followeth in the text, that he taught sitting. Preachers, belike, were sitters in those days. I would our preachers would preach either sitting or standing. The text doth not tell us what he taught. If I were a papist now, I could tell you what he said ; as Pope Nicholas and Bishop Lanfrank did, who tell us that Christ said thus : 'Peter, I do mean, by thus sitting in thy boat, that thou go to Rome, and be

bishop there five-and-twenty years after mine ascension ; and that all thy successors shall be rulers of the universal church after thee.' Well ; it followeth in the text, 'Launch out into the deep.' Here Peter was made a great man, and all his successors after him, say the papists. And their argument is this : he spake to Peter only, and in the singular number ; therefore he gave him pre-eminence above the rest. A goodly argument ! I ween it to be a syllogismus. Well ; I will make a like argument. Our Saviour Christ said to Judas, when he was about to betray him, 'What thou doest, do quickly.' He spake in the singular number to him ; therefore he gave him pre-eminence. Belike, he made him a cardinal ; and it might full well be ; for they have followed Judas ever since."

In this sermon, likewise, he again attacks the clergy. "Christ tells us," saith he, "it behooved him to preach the gospel, for therefore was he sent. Is it a marvellous thing, that our unpreaching prelates can read this place, and yet preach so little as they do ? I marvel that they can go quietly to bed. The devil hath set up a state of unpreaching prelacy these seven hundred years, and hath made unpreaching prelates. I heard of a bishop of England that went on a visitation, and when he should have been rung into the town, as the custom is, the great bell's clapper was fallen down. There was a great matter made of this, and the chief of the parish were much blamed for it in the visitation ; and the bishop was somewhat quick

with them. They made their answers, and excused themselves as well as they could: it was a chance, they said, and it should be amended as shortly as it might be. Among them there was one wiser than the rest, who comes up to the bishop: 'Why, my lord,' says he, 'doth your lordship make so great a matter of the bell that lacketh a clapper? Here is a bell,' saith he, and pointed to the pulpit, 'that hath lacked a clapper these twenty years.' I warrant you, this bishop was an unpreaching prelate; he could find fault with the bell that wanted a clapper to ring him into town, but he could find no fault with the parson that preached not at his benefice. I came once myself to a place, riding on a journey, and sent word overnight into the town, that I would preach there in the morning, because it was a holyday. The church stood in my way; and I took my horse, and rode thither, thinking I should have found a great company at church. When I came there, the church door was fast locked. I tarried there half an hour and more: at last, one of the parish comes to me, and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day; the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you, hinder them not.' And so I was fain to give place to Robin Hood. And all this cometh of unpreaching prelates: if the bishops had been preachers there should never have been any such thing. They upbraid the people with ignorance, when they were the cause of it themselves."

He concludes his sermon with an address to the king. "I know no man," saith he, "that hath greater labour than the king. What is his labour? To study God's book; to see that there be no unpreaching prelates in his realm, nor bribing judges; to see to all estates; to provide for the poor; to see that victuals are good and cheap. And is not this a labour trow ye? Christ teacheth us, by his example; that he abhorreth all idleness: when he was a carpenter, he did the work of his calling; and when he was a preacher, he did the work of that calling: he was no unpreaching prelate."

His seventh sermon was preached upon Good Friday, and is adapted to the day. It affords little opportunity, therefore, of dwelling upon the corruptions of the age. He begins with recapitulating the subjects of his former discourses. "I have entreated," says he, "of such matters as I thought fit for this auditory. I have had ado with many estates, even with the highest of all. I have entreated of the duty of kings, of the duty of magistrates and judges, and of the duty of prelates; and I think there is none of us, neither preacher nor hearer, but may be amended, and redress our lives. We may all say, yea, all the pack of us, 'We have sinned with our fathers, and done wickedly.' You that be of the court, and especially the sworn chaplains, beware of a lesson which a great man taught me upon my first coming to court. He told it me for good-will, and thought it well. 'You must beware,' said he, 'however

you do, not to contrary the king; let him have his sayings, and go with him.' Marry, out upon this counsel: shall I say as he saith? What a worm shall you feel gnawing! What remorse shall you have, when you remember how you have slacked your duty!"

In this sermon he gives his opinion of the fathers. Having found fault with an interpretation which Origen hath given of a passage of Scripture, "These doctors," says he, "we have great cause to bless God for; but I would not have them always allowed. They have handled many points of our faith very godly, and we may have a great stay upon them in many things; we might not well lack them. But yet I would not have men to be sworn to them, and so addict, as to take, hand over head, whatsoever they say: it were a great inconvenience so to do."

In his last sermon, which he acquaints his audience shall be the last he will ever preach in that place, he touches upon all the particular corruptions of the age. He begins it thus: "Take heed and beware of covetousness: take heed and beware of covetousness: take heed and beware of covetousness: and what, if I should say nothing else these three or four hours, but these words? Great complaints there are of it, and much crying out, and much preaching; but little amendment that I can see. Covetousness is the root of all evil. Then have at the root: out with your swords, ye preachers,

and strike at the root. Stand not ticking and toying at the branches, for new branches will spring out again ; but strike at the root, and fear not these great men, these men of power, these oppressors of the needy ; fear them not, but strike at the root."

In this sermon he addresses himself frequently, and with great freedom, to the king. "I come now," says he, "rather as a suitor to your majesty, than a preacher ; for I come to take my last farewell in this place : and here I will ask a petition. For the love of God, take an order for marriages here in England. There is much adultery now-a-days, not only in the nobility, but among the inferior sort. I could wish, therefore, that a law might be provided in this behalf, and that adulterers might be punished with death. If the husband or wife should become suitor, they might be pardoned the first time, but not the second. And here I have another suit to your majesty : When you come to age, beware what persons you have about you. For if you be set on pleasure, or disposed to wantonness, you shall have ministers enough to be fartherers and instruments of it. Fear not foreign princes, and foreign powers. God shall make you strong enough : fear him ; fear not them. Peradventure you shall have that shall move you, and say unto you, ' O, sir, such a one is a mighty prince, and a king of great power ; you cannot be without his friendship ; agree with him in religion, or else you shall have him your enemy.' Well, fear them not ;

cleave to God, and he shall defend you ; though you should have that would turn with you, yea, even in their white rochets. Beware, therefore, of two affections,—fear and love. And I require you, look to your office yourself, and lay not all on the officers' backs. Receive bills of supplication yourself. I do not see you do now-a-days as you were wont to do last year. Poor men put up bills every day, and never the nearer. Begin, therefore, doing of your office yourself, now when you are young ; and sit once or twice in the week in council among your lords : it will cause things to have good success, and matters will not be so lingered from day to day."

With equal spirit he taxes the inferior orders of men. "Ye noblemen," says he, "I wot not what rule ye keep ; but, for God's sake, hear the complaints of the poor. Many complain against you, that ye lie in bed till eight, nine, or ten o'clock. I cannot tell what revel ye have over night, whether banqueting, dicing, carding, or how it is : but in the morning, when poor suitors come to your houses, ye cannot be spoke with. They are kept sometimes without your gates ; or if they be let into the hall, or some outer chamber, out cometh one or other ; 'Sir, you cannot speak with my lord yet, he is asleep. And thus poor suitors are driven from day to day, that they cannot speak with you. For God's love, look better to it ; speak with poor men when they come to your houses, and despatch poor suitors. I went one day myself

betimes in the morning to a great man's house, to speak with him of business. And methought I was up betimes; but when I came thither, the great man was gone forth about such affairs as behoved him. Well, thought I, this is well; I like this. 'This man doth somewhat regard his duty. I came too late for my own matter, and lost my journey; but I was glad to be so beguiled. For God's sake, ye great men, follow this example: rise in the mornings; be ready for suitors that resort to you, and despatch them out of hand. In the city of Corinth, one had married his step-mother: he was a jolly fellow, a great rich man, belike an alderman of the city; and so they winked at it, and would not meddle with the matter. But St. Paul hearing of it wrote unto them, and in God's behalf charged them to do away with such abomination from among them: nor would he leave them till he had excommunicated that wicked person. If ye now should excommunicate all such wicked persons, there would be much ado in England. But the magistrates show favour to such, and will not suffer them to be rooted out, or put to shame. 'O, he is such a man's servant, we may not meddle with him.' 'O, he is a gentleman, we may not put him to shame.' And so lechery is used throughout all England; and such lechery as is used in no other part of the world. And yet it is made a matter of sport, a laughing matter, not to be heeded. But beware, ye magistrates; for God's love, beware of this leaven. I would wish that Moses' law

might be restored for punishment for lechery. Fear not man, but God. If there be a judgment between a poor man and a great man, what, must there be a corruption of justice? 'O, he is a great man; I dare not displease him.' Fie upon thee! art thou a judge, and wilt be afraid to give right judgment? Fear him not, be he never so great a man, but uprightly do true justice. Likewise some pastors go from their cure: they are afraid of the plague; they dare not come nigh any sick body; but hire others, and they go away themselves. Out upon thee! the wolf cometh upon thy flock to devour them; and when they have most need of thee, thou runnest away from them. The soldier also, that should go to war, will draw back as much as he can. 'O! I shall be slain! O! such and such went, and never came back! such men went into Norfolk, and were slain there.' But if the king commandeth thee to go, thou art bound to go. Follow thy occupation: in serving the king, thou shalt serve God.

"Ye bribers, that go secretly about taking bribes, have in your minds when ye devise your secret fetches, how Elizeus' servant was served, and was openly known. For God's proverb will be true: 'There is nothing hid that shall not be revealed.' He that took the silver basin and ewer for a bribe, thinketh that it will never come out: but he may know that I know it; and not only I, but there be many more that know it. It will never be merry in England till we have the skins of such. For

what needeth bribing where men do their business uprightly? I have to lay out for the king three thousand pounds: well, when I have laid it out, and bring in mine account, I must give three hundred marks to have my bills warranted. If I have done truly and uprightly, what need I give a penny to have my bills warranted? If I do bring in a true account, wherefore should one groat be given? Smell ye nothing in this? What need any bribes be given, except the bills be false? Well, such practice hath been in England: but beware, it will out one day. And here now I would speak to you, my master minters, augmentationers, receivers, surveyors, and auditors: ye are known well enough what ye were afore ye came to your offices, and what lands ye had then, and what ye have purchased since, and what buildings ye make daily. Well, I doubt not but there be some good officers among you, but I will not swear for all. And, for the love of God, let poor workmen be paid. They make their moan, that they can get no money. The poor labourers, gunmakers, powder-men, bow-makers, arrow-makers, smiths, carpenters, and other crafts cry for their wages. They be unpaid, some of them, three or four months, some of them half a year; yea, some of them put up bills this time twelve-month for their money, and cannot be paid yet. The first Lent I preached here, I preached of restitution. 'Restitution,' quoth some, 'what should he preach of restitution? Let him preach of contrition, and let restitution alone; we can never

make restitution.' Then say I, if thou wilt not make restitution, thou shalt go to the devil. Now choose thee either restitution, or damnation. There be two kinds of restitution, secret and open : and whether of the two be used, if restitution be made, it is well enough. At my first preaching of restitution, one man took remorse of conscience, and acknowledged to me that he had deceived the king, and was willing to make restitution : so the first Lent twenty pounds came to my hands for the king's use. I was promised twenty pounds more the same Lent, but it could not be made up, so that it came not. Well, the next Lent came three hundred and twenty pounds more : I received it myself, and paid it to the king's council. There I was asked what he was that had thus made restitution ; but should I have named him ? nay, they should as soon have had this wezand of mine. Well now, this Lent came one hundred and eighty pounds more, which I have paid this present day to the king's council. And so this man hath made a goodly restitution. ' If every one who hath beguiled the king,' said I to a certain nobleman, who is one of the king's council, ' should make restitution after this sort, it would cough up the king, I warrant you, twenty thousand pounds.' ' Yea,' quoth the other, ' a whole hundred thousand pounds.' Alack, alack ! make restitution ; for God's sake, make restitution : you will cough in hell else, that all the devils will laugh at your coughing. There is no remedy : restitution or hell. Now

this is of secret restitution. Some examples have been of open restitution. I am not afraid to name one : it was Master Sherington, an honest gentleman, and one that God loveth. He openly confessed that he had deceived the king, and made open restitution. O, what an argument may he have against the devil!"

I will conclude these extracts with his own apology for his free speaking. "England," says he, "cannot abide this gear; it cannot hear God's minister and his threatening against sin. Though the sermon be never so good, and never so true, straight,—‘He is a seditious fellow, he maketh trouble and rebellion in the realm, he lacketh discretion.’ The Ninevites rebuked not Jonas, that he lacked discretion, or that he spake out of time. But in England, if God's preacher be any thing quick, or speak sharply, then he is a foolish fellow, and lacketh discretion. Now-a-days, if they cannot reprove the doctrine, they will reprove the preacher: ‘What! preach such things now? He should have respect to the time and the state of things.’ It rejoiceth me, when my friends tell me that people find fault with my discretion: for by likelihood, think I, the doctrine is true; for if they could find fault with the doctrine, they would not charge me with the lack of discretion or the inconvenience of the time. I will ask you a question: I pray you, when should Jonas have preached against the covetousness of Nineveh, if the covetous men should have appointed him his time? I know that preachers

ought to have discretion in their preaching ; and that they ought to have a consideration and respect to the place and the time, where and when they preach ; and I say here what I would not say in the country for no good. But what then ? Sin must be rebuked, sin must be plainly spoken against."

Thus far Mr. Latimer: superior to all corruption himself, he kept in awe a licentious court. Nor will the reader take offence at my multiplying upon him so many large quotations. I not only thought them very valuable remains, but a very necessary ornament, likewise, to this part of my history. For it would have been impossible to have given a true idea, in any words but his own, of that noble zeal in the cause of truth which, upon all occasions, he exerted; and which makes so principal a part of his character. Nor can we wonder at the effect of his preaching, when we consider its freedom. He charged sin so home upon the consciences of the guilty, that he left no room for self-deceit or misapplication; it being a more necessary part, in his opinion, of the preacher's office to rouse men into a sense of their guilt, than to discourse them merely in the didactic strain; inasmuch as most men know more than they practise.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE Mr. Latimer was thus discharging the duty of a court preacher, a slander passed upon him; which, being taken up by a low historian of those times, hath found its way into these. The matter of it is, that, after the lord high admiral's attainder and execution, Mr. Latimer publicly defended his death in a sermon before the king; that he aspersed his character, and that he did it merely to pay a servile compliment to the protector. The first part of the charge is true; but the second and third are false.

As for his aspersing the admiral's character, his character was so bad, there was no room for aspersion. A more debauched person hath rarely infested a court than he was during the last reign. But years growing upon him, and his appetite for pleasure abating, his passions took a new course, and from a voluptuous, he became an ambitious man. The pravity of his disposition, however, continued the same, though the object of his pursuit was altered. Having married the queen dowager of England, he began to raise his expectations to great heights. But enlarging his views still further as he rose, and finding his marriage an encumbrance to him, he eased himself of it, as is generally suspected, by unfair means. This was done to make way for the Princess Elizabeth, to whose bed he aspired; and, by her means, to the crown.

But being disappointed of this, he entered into cabals against the protector, set himself at the head of a party, and went so far as even to coin money and raise troops; threatening to take the king and the government out of his brother's hands. For these treasonable actions, and after frequent and fruitless admonitions, he was sentenced to lose his head; having been prosecuted, according to the usual but inequitable practice of those times, by a bill in parliament, though there was matter enough to have condemned him in a fairer trial.

But though the Lord Sudley paid only so due a forfeit to the laws of his country, and had, indeed, been used with much greater tenderness than his offences deserved; yet his death occasioned great clamour, and was made use of by the lords of the opposition (for he left a very dissatisfied party behind him) as a handle to raise a popular odium against the protector.

Mr. Latimer had always a high esteem for the protector: he thought him an honest and a good man, and of better intentions toward the public, than any of the lords at that time about the king. He was mortified, therefore, to see so invidious and base an opposition thwarting the schemes of so much public spirit; and endeavoured to lessen it by showing the admiral's character in its true light, from some anecdotes not commonly known.

Mr. Latimer's behaviour, therefore, in this instance, may be fairly accounted for; his whole character, indeed, was contradictory to any

sinister practice. What could induce that man to flatter the great who had voluntarily resigned one of the highest offices in his profession; and which, when voluntarily offered to him again, he had refused; a man, too, who had taken all opportunities of inveighing against the vices of the greatest personages with a freedom which in the strictest times would have been admired? So improbable, indeed, the slander is, that I should not have taken the pains I have taken to confute it, if it had not been credited, at least recorded as credible, by so great a man as our countryman, John Milton; who, being a warm party writer in the republican times of the Oliverian usurpation, suffers his zeal against Episcopacy, in more instances than this, to bias his veracity, or, at best, to impose upon his understanding.

But though the protector had thus triumphed over the wicked practices of his brother, he did not long survive him. The opposition soon revived under another and a more formidable head, the duke of Northumberland.

This nobleman was the son of that infamous Dudley, who, in the days of Henry VII., drew upon himself the odium of the nation by the invidious employment he held under that avaricious prince. When Henry VIII. came to the crown, he sacrificed the father to the resentment of the people, and raised the son to be a peer of the realm. But, during the reign of this prince, he never appeared of prime consideration in the public eye. In King Edward's

reign he showed himself with distinction enough. He was a man of unlicensed pleasure and unbounded ambition ; more debauched, if possible, and more aspiring, than the Lord Sudley himself, and by far more dangerous ; inasmuch as he was more artful than he, more deep, more specious, and more discerning. He was, at the same time, so resolute and daring, that nothing arduous or dangerous ever checked him. In a word, he had more mischievous designs, and better abilities to do mischief, than any man of his time, excepting only the bishop of Winchester.

This person had long viewed the protector with an eye of jealousy and hatred. He was agitating great schemes for the aggrandizement of his family, and knew that while the protector lived he could but little advance them. Resolving, therefore, to rid himself of this obstacle, he laid a train with equal malice and dexterity, which, in the end, effected his design. The protector, entangled in his contrivances, lost his life, and left an open field for the machinations of his enemy.

From this time we meet with no accounts of Mr. Latimer, during the remainder of King Edward's reign. It seems most probable, that, upon this revolution at court, he retired into the country, and made use of the king's license, as a general preacher, in those parts where he thought his labours might be most useful. I shall, however, for the sake of connection, sketch out the intervening history of those times, till

we meet with Mr. Latimer again, in the order of them.

After the protector's death, the duke of Northumberland became all powerful at court; and soon began to execute the wicked projects he had planned. His first step was to bring about a marriage between his son Guilford Dudley and the eldest daughter of the house of Suffolk, a house nearly related to the crown.

About the time when this alliance was concluded, the king fell sick; and his distemper increasing, though the symptoms were not yet violent, the duke advised the settlement of the succession. Great objections were made to the Princess Mary, on the account of her religion; and objections were made both to her and her sister, on the account of their illegitimacy. But though they had an act of parliament in their favour, by the duke's management they were both set aside, and the crown was settled upon his daughter-in-law, the Lady Jane Grey; who, upon the king's death, which happened soon after, was proclaimed queen of England. The world observing how aptly the king's death coincided with the duke's designs, had little reason to doubt of its being a projected part of a regular plan.

Thus far the duke succeeded to his wish, and found a more general concurrence in the officers of state and judges, than he could have expected. But in the midst of this tranquillity, a sudden storm arose.

The Princess Mary, of whom he fatally

thought himself too secure, found adherents in many parts of the nation, most of whom nothing but their great aversion to the duke's government could have drawn to her party. Her power daily increasing, the duke led an army against her. But his efforts were vain. While his forces were continually diminishing by revolts, he was thunderstruck with news from London, that the council had deserted him, and had proclaimed Queen Mary. Thus forsaken of all his friends, like other disappointed schemers, he forsook himself; and agonizing for some time under the pangs of baffled guilt and ambition, he gave at last a temporary ease to his distracted thoughts, by submitting himself to the queen's mercy; and if every servile compliance, even to the abjuring the religion he had all his life professed, could have saved him, he had been saved. But his crimes exceeded forgiveness. He was given up, therefore, to justice, and ended his life upon a scaffold.

With him fell his new creation, Queen Jane, an incomparable lady, endowed with every virtue, unfortunate only in having been made the tool of a practised villain.

Queen Mary having thus obtained the crown, began next to think of settling her government. Religion was her first care. As to her own principles, they were well known; though she had temporized under her father with a good share of compliance, and had made promises, too, upon her advancement to the crown, that she would introduce no public change in the

established religion. But promises of this kind met with easy dispensations. She resolved, therefore, as soon as she could, to restore popery, and reconcile the nation to the see of Rome.

Her chief ministers in this design were Stephen Gardiner, now made lord chancellor, and Edmund Bonner, bishop of London.

The former of these persons hath already been often mentioned in a disadvantageous light. He was a man, indeed, formed by nature for court intrigues. He had a clear head, quick parts, improved by long practice in the world, and a dark inscrutable mind, in which he treasured up every thing that passed by him; and, laying things together with wonderful sagacity, formed the deepest schemes. These he could with great judgment adapt to circumstances as they arose; and what cunning and dissimulation could not effect, (in which he excelled all men of his time,) he would complete by a cool yet dauntless resolution. He was naturally fierce and cruel; and this temper was inflamed by the usage he had met with, which was indeed but indifferent, under King Edward; so that he bent himself to persecution in the full spirit of retaliation.

The bishop of London had formerly maintained an interest with Henry VIII. by means of the lowest adulation, to which that prince was very open; and though he went along with the innovations of that reign, yet when Queen Mary began to look among her friends, his suf-

ferings under King Edward were accepted as an atonement. Hitherto he had acted in disguise ; but, finding himself now free from restraint, the whole man appeared. And sure the genius of popery had never a more proper subject to work on. He was a man of violent passions, and those chiefly of a sanguinary kind ; of little observation and knowledge, and without any judgment, as if just prepared for the infusions of blind zeal and bigotry.

These were the persons from whose counsels, upon the present revolution of government, the settlement of religion was expected. Bonner was, indeed, little more than an agent in the hands of Gardiner ; who, on many occasions, chose rather to sit concealed, and act by proxy. It suited the darkness of his disposition, and he found in Bonner an instrument entirely adapted to his purpose,—open ears, an impetuous temper, raging zeal, a hardened heart, and an obstinate perseverance ; so that Gardiner had only to wind him up occasionally, and give him a proper direction, and the zealot moved with the regularity of a machine, and with what impetuosity his director impressed.

The introduction of popery being thus resolved on, the first step which was taken was, to prohibit all preaching throughout the kingdom ; and to license only such as were known to be popishly inclined.

The queen's designs being now everywhere apparent, the reformed clergy presently took the alarm. They saw their parishes about to be

corrupted by Romish preachers, who spread themselves over the nation in great numbers; and, thinking in the primitive manner that it was right to obey God rather than man, they resolved to endure the worst for the sake of their religion. Many of them, therefore, preached with great freedom, in their accustomed manner, against the doctrines of popery. And, to set them an example, Archbishop Cranmer drew up a very free paper, by way of protestation, against the mass; which got abroad before he published it. Upon being questioned about it by the council, he boldly answered, the paper was his, and he was only sorry that he had not fixed it, as he intended, with his hand and seal, upon St. Paul's gate. Most men wondered that he was suffered to escape; but it was thought more prudent to begin with the inferior clergy. Accordingly, a strict inquiry was made after the more forward and popular preachers, and many of them were taken into custody, some without any cause alleged; particularly Rogers and Bradford, who had used their popularity in no instance, since the late change of government, but in rescuing a popish priest from an enraged multitude. After these, others of more distinction were imprisoned; and, in a little time, the archbishop himself.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE this severe inquiry was carrying on in London, Mr. Latimer was in the country, where he continued preaching in his usual manner, unaffected by the danger of the times. But he did not long enjoy this liberty. The bishop of Winchester, who had proscribed him with the first, sent a messenger to cite him before the council. He had notice of this design some hours before the messenger's arrival; but he made no use of the intelligence. Like other eminent reformers of that time, he chose rather to meet than to avoid a question; thinking that he could not give a nobler testimony to the uprightness of his conscience, than by showing the world it was a sufficient security to him in whatever dangers it might involve him.

The messenger, therefore, found him equipped for his journey; at which expressing his surprise, Mr. Latimer told him that he was as ready to attend him to London, thus called on to answer for his faith, as he ever was to take any journey in his life; and that he doubted not but that God, who had already enabled him to stand before two princes, would enable him to stand before a third. The messenger then acquainting him that he had no orders to seize his person, delivered a letter, and departed. From this it is plain, that the bishop of Winchester, and the other lords of the council, chose rather to drive him out of the kingdom than to bring him to any public question. They well knew the

firmness of his mind; and were afraid, as Mr. Fox observes, "lest his constancy should deface them in their popery, and confirm the godly in the truth."

Mr. Latimer, however, opening the letter, and finding it to contain a citation from the council, resolved to obey it. He set out, therefore, immediately for London. As he passed through Smithfield, where heretics were usually burned, he said cheerfully, "This place hath long groaned for me." The next morning he waited on the council; who, having loaded him with many severe reproaches, sent him to the tower.

This was but a repetition of a former part of his life; only he now met with harsher treatment, and had more frequent occasion to exercise his resignation; of which virtue no man possessed a larger measure. Nay, even the usual cheerfulness of his disposition did not now forsake him; of which we have one instance still remaining:—

A servant leaving his apartment, Mr. Latimer called after him, and bade him tell his master that unless he took better care of him, he would certainly escape him. Upon this message, the lieutenant, with some discomposure in his countenance, came to Mr. Latimer, and desired an explanation of what he had said to his servant. "Why, you expect, I suppose, sir," replied Mr. Latimer, "that I shall be burned; but if you do not allow me a little fire this frosty weather, I can tell you I shall first be starved."

In the meantime the bishop of Winchester

and his friends held frequent councils on public affairs, and wished to make it believed that reason as well as power was on their side. With this view it was resolved, that, when the convocation met, the argument between the papists and the Protestants should be handled. But Gardiner was a better politician than to commit a matter of such consequence to a fair debate. He had provided for the success, therefore, by modelling a convocation to his mind; in which only six Protestant divines got admittance. By this junto, points of divinity and articles of faith were settled.

The Protestants, as they very well might, were loud in their clamour against such manifest partiality; and made so fair a representation of the disingenuous treatment they had received, that Gardiner, fearing his cause rather injured than promoted by what he had done, resolved to do something in the same way less liable to exception. Soon after it was given out, that the controversy between the papists and Protestants should be finally determined in a solemn disputation, to be held at Oxford, between the most eminent divines on each side. And so far the papists acted honestly; for Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, who were confessedly the most eminent divines of their party, were appointed to manage the dispute on the part of the Protestants. Accordingly they were taken out of the tower, where they had all been imprisoned, and were sent to Oxford.

Of these three, Ridley was generally esteemed

the most eminent for parts and learning; as, indeed, he was superior in these points to most men of the age in which he lived. He possessed, likewise, in a great degree, all those valuable qualities which make a man amiable in society. Through Cranmer's recommendation, in King Edward's time, he had been promoted to the bishopric of London; over which he presided with that exemplary lustre which piety and virtue add to eminence of station. In the beginning of Queen Mary, he was involved with the first in the troubles of the times, which no man endured with greater constancy.

The Protestant disputants being thus appointed, proper persons were next thought on to oppose them. At length it was determined to assign this office to Dr. Weston, prolocutor of the convocation, and an assembly of divines chosen out of both universities. Letters, therefore, were despatched to Oxford, to put all things in readiness; and soon after to Cambridge, where commissioners were immediately appointed.

In the meantime Mr. Latimer and his companions were closely confined at Oxford, in the common prison; deprived of every comfort, but what they possessed in their own breasts. How free the disputation was likely to be, they might easily imagine, when they found themselves denied the use even of books, and pen, and ink. Their prison hours, however, were not spent in vain lamentations; their religion raised them above all human sufferings, and all mortal fears. Their chief resource was in

prayer, in which exercise they spent great part of every day. Mr. Latimer, particularly, would often continue kneeling till he was not able to rise without help. The principal subject of his prayers was, that God would enable him to maintain the profession of his religion to the last; that God would again restore his gospel to England, and preserve the Princess Elizabeth to be a comfort to this land.

Mr. Fox has preserved a conference, afterward put into writing, which was held at this time between Bishop Ridley and Bishop Latimer. As it is worth the reader's notice, and may, without any great interruption, be inserted in this place, I shall take such passages from it as I shall think worth preserving.

The two bishops are represented sitting in their prison, ruminating upon the solemn preparations then making for their trial, of which probably they were now first informed. Bishop Ridley first broke silence. "The time," said he, "is now come: we are now called upon either to deny our faith, or to suffer death in its defence. You, Mr. Latimer, are an old soldier of Christ, and have frequently withstood the fear of death; whereas I am raw in the service, and inexperienced." With this preface he introduces a request, that Mr. Latimer, whom he calls his father, would hear him propose such arguments as he thinks it most likely his adversaries would urge against him, and assist him in providing himself with proper answers to them. To this Mr. Latimer, in his usual strain of good

humour, answered, that he fancied the good bishop was treating him as he remembered Mr. Bilney used formerly to do, who, when he wanted to teach him, would always do it under colour of being taught himself. "But in the present case," says he, "my lord, I am determined for myself to give them very little trouble. I shall just offer them a plain account of my faith, and shall say very little more; for I know any thing more will be to no purpose. They talk of a free disputation; but I am well assured, their grand argument will be, as it was once their forefathers, 'We have a law, and by our law ye ought to die.'" However, upon Mr. Ridley's pressing his request, they entered upon the examination he desired.

This part of their conference contains little that is curious; only the common arguments against the tenets of popery. When they had finished this exercise, Ridley breaks out in this pathetic strain:—

"Thus you see, good father, how I would prepare myself for my adversary; and how I would learn by practice to be expert in those weapons which I shall presently be obliged to wield. In Tinedale, upon the borders of Scotland, the place of my nativity, I have known my countrymen watch night and day in arms; especially when they had notice of any intended inroad from the Scots. And though by such bravery many of them lost their lives, yet they defended their country, died in a good cause, and entailed the love of the neighbourhood upon

their posterity. And shall we not watch in the cause of Christ, and in the defence of our religion, whereon depend all our hopes of immortality? Shall we not go always armed? ever ready to receive a watchful foe? Let us then awake; and taking the cross upon our shoulders, let us follow our captain, Christ, who, by his own blood hath hallowed the way that leadeth to God. Thus, good father, I have opened my heart freely unto you. And now, methinks, I see you just about to lift up your eyes to heaven, in your accustomed manner, and turning your prophetic countenance upon me, thus to speak; ‘Trust not, my son,’ (I pray you vouchsafe me the honour of this name, for in it I shall think myself both honoured by you and loved,) ‘trust not, I say, my son, to these word-weapons, but remember what our Lord says, *It shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak.*’ Pray for me, O father, pray for me, that I may throw my whole care upon God; and may trust in him only in my distresses.”

“Of my prayers,” replied the old bishop, “you may be well assured; nor do I doubt but I shall have yours in return. And, indeed, prayer and patience should be our great resources. For myself, had I the learning of St. Paul, I should think it ill laid out upon an elaborate defence. Yet our case, my lord, admits of comfort. Our enemies can do no more than God permits; and God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength. Be at a point with them; stand to that, and let

them say and do what they please. To use many words would be vain ; yet it is requisite to give a reasonable account of your faith, if they will quietly hear you. For other things, in a wicked judgment-hall, a man may keep silence after the example of Christ. As for their sophistry, you know falsehood may often be displayed in the colours of truth. But, above all things, be upon your guard against the fear of death. This is the great argument you must oppose. Poor Shaxton ! it is to be feared this argument had the greatest weight in his recantation. But let us be steadfast and unmoveable ; assuring ourselves, that we cannot be more happy than by being such Philippians, as not only believe in Christ, but dare suffer for his sake." With such noble fortitude, and such exalted sentiments, were these two great reformers of religion inspired.

But we must now leave them in their prison, and introduce a scene of a different kind.

CHAPTER XI.

WE left the Cambridge commissioners setting out for Oxford, where they arrived in great pomp on the 13th of April, 1554. Here they were received with a profusion of academical compliments : conferring of degrees, speeches, feasts, and processions. Forms were next adjusted, and a method in their proceedings agreed on by the commissioners.

In this commission were joined thirty-three persons. To run over a catalogue of their names would be needless, as the greater part of them were men of no note. It is no breach of charity to say, they were only distinguished from each other by different degrees of bigotry and ignorance.

Some among them were of more consequence,—Weston, Smith, Tresham, and Chedsey.

Weston was a man of considerable learning, which gave him great reputation with his party. In all points of divinity, his judgment was esteemed decisive; and none was thought more worthy to preside over the convocation. His religion, however, was only in his head: it made no impression upon his heart. Yet he maintained a decent outside; and had the address to pass off in the world a great share of spiritual pride for sanctity of manners; till, having at length the misfortune to be taken in adultery, he was generally known. He was at this time, however, in the meridian of his credit.

Smith was a mere temporizer, and had all his life taken his creed from the establishment. He had been bred a papist, and had written with some credit against priests' marriages. But when Protestantism took the lead, he got himself recommended, through Cranmer's means, to the reigning powers; and to establish himself the better, promised to confute his own book. But before his treatise was finished, the times changed; and his faith changing with

them, he was again taken notice of by the heads of the prevailing religion; his pen recommending him, which was easy and elegant; while the story of his having agreed to confute his own book, which was indeed a fact, was imputed only to the malice of the adverse party.

Tresham was an orthodox divine; but one of those heavy mortals who have great learning and no sense. He was a bigot in the last degree. But the following story will give a just idea of his character. When Queen Mary began to think of restoring the old religion at Oxford, Dr. Tresham, then sub-dean of Christ-church, was among those who were trusted by her in this business. Calling together, therefore, the members of his college, he recommended popery to them in a set oration; and having talked over all the common-place arguments with sufficient prolixity, he emphatically concluded with telling them, that a parcel of very fine copes had been made to go to Windsor; but that the queen had been so gracious as to send them to Christ-church; and that if they would go to mass, they should each have one; that upon that condition, he would, moreover, procure for them the lady-bell at Bampton, which would make Christ-church bells the sweetest of any in England; and that, lastly, he would give them as fine a water-sprinkle as eyes ever beheld.

But among them all, Chedsey was by far the most considerable. He was indeed a very able man. For parts and learning, few of his

time went beyond him. But he, too, had a ductile faith, which had been wholly guided by that of his superiors. He made atonement, however, for his temporizing under King Edward, by his zeal in persecuting under Queen Mary.

These persons, having now received all the civilities which the zeal of Oxford could express, and having settled all previous punctilios, proceeded to business. Arraying themselves therefore in scarlet, they met at St. Mary's church; where, seating themselves before the altar, and placing the prolocutor in the midst, they sent for the prisoners.

The crowd soon made way for Archbishop Cranmer, who was brought in by a guard of armed men. When the tumult was a little composed, the prolocutor made a short oration to his audience in praise of religious unity: and then turning to the archbishop, he reminded him of the pious education he had received in an orthodox seminary; of the eminent station he had held under a Catholic king, and of his long attachment to popery. He then spoke with an affected concern of his shameful apostacy; and of the several errors which had crept into the church while he presided over it. Lastly, he acquainted him with the design of their present meeting; informing him, that the convocation, by her majesty's order, taking into consideration his apostacy, and that of his brethren, had commissioned them to endeavour to bring them back to their mother church;

that for this end certain articles had been drawn up, which the convocation had signed, and which it was expected that he too, and his brethren, would either subscribe or confute.

The prolocutor then ordered the articles to be read aloud, which were these :—

“The natural body of Christ is really in the sacrament after the words spoken by the priest.

“In the sacrament, after the words of consecration, no other substance does remain than the substance of the body and blood of Christ.

“In the mass is a sacrifice propitiatory for the sins of the quick and dead.”

The articles being read, the archbishop, desiring leave, read them over to himself three or four times ; and then asking a few pertinent questions with regard to the import of some of the terms, with some earnestness denied them all. “I am as great a friend,” said he, “gentlemen, to unity, as any of you ; but I can never think of making falsehood the bond of peace.” The prolocutor, making no reply, ordered a copy of the articles to be delivered to him ; and fixed a day, on which he told him he expected he would publicly maintain his negative.

Dr. Ridley was next brought in, who, without any hesitation, denied the articles. Upon which the prolocutor appointed him, likewise, a disputation-day, and dismissed him.

Bishop Latimer was brought in last, like a primitive martyr, in his prison attire. He had a cap upon his head, buttoned under his chin, a pair of spectacles hanging at his breast, a New

Testament under his arm, and a staff in his hand. He was almost spent with pressing through the crowd; and the prolocutor ordering a chair to be brought for him, he walked up to it, and, saying he was a very old man, sat down without any ceremony. The articles were then tendered to him, which he denied. The prolocutor, upon this, telling him that he must dispute on the Wednesday following, the old bishop, with as much cheerfulness as he would have shown upon the most ordinary occasion, shaking his palsied head, answered, smiling, "Indeed, gentlemen, I am just as well qualified to be made governor of Calais." He then complained that he was very old and very infirm; and said that he had the use of no book but of that under his arm, which he had read seven times over deliberately, without finding the least mention made of the mass. In this speech he gave great offence, by saying, in his humorous way, alluding to transubstantiation, that he could find neither the marrowbones nor the sinews of the mass in the New Testament. Upon which, the prolocutor cried out with some warmth, that he would make him find both; and when Mr. Latimer, recollecting himself, was going to explain his meaning in that expression, he was not suffered to speak.

Thus the assembly broke up; having observed, upon the whole, more decency and good manners than was generally expected.

At length the appointed day came for the archbishop's disputation. A stranger might

have known something very uncommon was in agitation ; for the whole university was in motion. Almost at day-break the schools were thronged. About eight the commissioners took their seats ; and presently afterward the archbishop was brought in guarded.

But I will not delay the reader with the particulars of this day ; nor of that on which Bishop Ridley disputed. I shall only say in general, for the sake of truth, that the papists do not seem to have had justice done them by their Protestant adversaries. Let these put what gloss upon the affair they please, the papists certainly had the better of the argument on both those days. The case was this : they drew their chief proofs in favour of transubstantiation from the fathers ; many of whom, and some of the more esteemed writers among them, speak on this subject in a language by no means evangelical. The two bishops, accordingly, being thus pressed by an authority which they durst not reject, were not a little embarrassed. And, indeed, how could a Protestant divine defend such a passage as this from St. Chrysostom?—“What a miracle is this! He who sits above with the Father, at the very same instant of time is handled with the hands of men ;” or such a passage as this from the same writer?—“That which is in the cup, is the same which flowed from the side of Christ ;” or this from Theophylact?—“Because we would abhor the eating of raw flesh, and especially human flesh, therefore it appeareth as bread, though it is in-

deed flesh ;” or this from St. Austin ?—“ Christ was carried in his own hands, when he said, ‘This is my body ;’” or this from Justin Martyr ?—“ We are taught, that when this nourishing food is consecrated, it becomes the flesh and blood of Christ ;” or this from St. Ambrose ?—“ It is bread before it is consecrated ; but when that ceremony hath passed upon it, of bread it becomes the flesh of Christ.” Of all these passages, and many others of the same kind, the papists, with not a little dexterity, made their avail. The two bishops, in the meantime, instead of disavowing an insufficient authority, weakly defended a good cause ; evading and distinguishing after the manner of schoolmen. Ridley’s defence, indeed, was very animated ; for he had great quickness of parts as well as learning. Cranmer’s was no way extraordinary ; through his great modesty he seems to have been overawed by his audience. And yet Ridley would have acted as wise a part, if he had taken his friend Bishop Latimer’s advice, and contented himself with giving a reasonable account of his faith. I shall only add, that these disputations were very tumultuous, and accompanied with great indecency, both of language and behaviour, on the part of the papists.

The day after the bishop of London disputed, Bishop Latimer was called into the schools. Of this day I shall be more particular.

CHAPTER XII.

THE commissioners being now seated, the audience formed, and the tumult of a crowd in some degree subsided, Dr. Weston, the prolocutor, rising up, acquainted his hearers that the cause of their meeting was to defend the orthodox doctrine of transubstantiation, and to confute certain novel opinions which had been lately propagated with great zeal in the nation. "And of you, father," said he, turning to the old bishop, "I beg, if you have any thing to say, that you will be as concise as possible." This was spoken in Latin : upon which, the bishop answered, "I hope, sir, you will give me leave to speak what I have to speak in English: I have been very little conversant in the Latin tongue these twenty years." The prolocutor consented ; and the bishop, having thanked him, replied, "I will just beg leave then, sir, to protest my faith. Indeed I am not able to dispute. I will protest my faith ; and you may then do with me just what you please."

Upon this he took a paper out of his pocket, and began to read his protestation. But he had not proceeded many minutes, when a murmur rose on every hand, increasing by degrees into a clamour ; which the prolocutor was so far from checking, that in a very indecent manner he patronized it, calling out with some circumstances of rudeness upon the bishop to desist. The old man, surprised with this sudden tumult of ill-manners, paused in admiration at it : but

presently recovering himself, he turned to the prolocutor, and said, with some vehemence, "In my time I have spoken before two kings, and have been heard for some hours together without interruption : here I cannot be permitted one quarter of an hour. Dr. Weston, I have frequently heard of you before ; but I think I never saw you till now. I perceive you have great wit and great learning : God grant you may make a right use of these gifts !" Other things he said ; but these are the principal. His speech had its effect. The prolocutor took his paper, and said, he would read it himself. But whether he could not read it, or would not, he presently laid it down, and called out to the bishop, "Since you refuse to dispute, will you then subscribe ?" Upon his answering in the negative, Weston artfully led him by a train of familiar questions into an argument ; and when he thought he had raised him to a proper pitch, he gave a sign to Dr. Smith, the opponent, to begin ; who, being prepared, immediately rose up, and in a pompous manner prefacing the disputation, gave out the question. When he had done, the old bishop gravely answered, "I am sorry, sir, that this worshipful audience must be disappointed in their expectation. I have already spoken my mind."

The prolocutor, observing this, began again in his artful manner to draw Mr. Latimer into an argument. "Pray, sir," said he, "how long have you been in prison ?" "About nine months, sir." "But I was imprisoned," said Weston,

“six years.” “I am heartily sorry for it, sir.” “I think you were once, Mr. Latimer, of our way of thinking.” “I was, sir.” “I have heard, too, that you have said mass in your time.” “I have, sir.” He then asked him, why he altered his opinion; and thus by degrees led him to answer the chief arguments brought from Scripture in favour of transubstantiation. They then began to ply him with the fathers; and first, a passage from Hilary was quoted. As he was about to answer, one of the commissioners called out to him, (on account of the populace, most probably,) “Mr. Latimer, speak in Latin, speak in Latin: I know you can do it, if you please.” But the bishop, saying he had the prolocutor’s leave, went on in English, and told them that as for the passage from Hilary, which they had quoted, he really could not see that it made much for them; but he would answer them by another quotation from Melancthon, who says, that “if the fathers had foreseen how much weight their authority was to have in this controversy, they would have written with more caution.”

But the opponent not being satisfied with this, begs leave to reduce the words of Hilary into a syllogistic argument, and begins thus: “Such as is the unity of our flesh with Christ’s flesh, such, nay, greater, is the unity of Christ with the Father. But the unity of Christ’s flesh with our flesh is true and substantial. Therefore, the unity of Christ with the Father is true and substantial.” Here he paused, ex-

pecting that the bishop would deny his major or his minor, as the logicians speak. But instead of that, he answered gravely, "You may go on, sir, if you please ; but, upon my word, I do not understand you."

The jargon of this learned doctor being silenced, others attacked him, but with equal success. He answered their questions as far as civility required ; but none of them could engage him in any formal disputation. And when proofs from the fathers were multiplied upon him, he at length told them plainly, that such proofs had no weight with him ; that the fathers, no doubt, were often deceived ; and that he never depended upon them but when they depended upon Scripture. "Then you are not of St. Chrysostom's faith," replied his antagonist, "nor of St. Austin's?" "I have told you," said Mr. Latimer, "I am not, except when they bring Scripture for what they say."

Little more was said, when the prolocutor, finding it was impossible to urge him into a controversy, rose up, and dissolved the assembly, crying out to the populace, "Here you all see the weakness of heresy against the truth : here is a man who, adhering to his errors, hath given up the gospel, and rejected the fathers." The old bishop made no reply ; but wrapping his gown about him, and taking up his New Testament and his staff, walked out as unconcerned as he came in.

Thus he maintained to the last his resolution of not disputing ; a resolution which he had not

hastily taken. Mr. Addison (in his *Spectator*, No. 465) greatly admires his behaviour on this occasion, though he does not assign it to its true cause. "This venerable old man," says he, "knowing how his abilities were impaired by age, and that it was impossible for him to recollect all those reasons which had directed him in the choice of his religion, left his companions, who were in the full possession of their parts and learning, to baffle and confound their antagonists by the force of reason. As for himself, he only repeated to his adversaries the articles in which he firmly believed, and in the profession of which he was determined to die." The truth is, he knew it would answer no end to be more explicit.

These solemn disputations being thus at an end, nothing now remained but to pass sentence. On the Friday following, therefore, the commissioners, seated in their accustomed form, sent for the three bishops to St. Mary's church; where, after some affected exhortations to recant, the prolocutor first excommunicated and then condemned them. As soon as the sentence was read, Bishop Latimer, lifting up his eyes, cried out, "I thank God most heartily that he hath prolonged my life to this end!" To which the prolocutor replied, "If you go to heaven in this faith, I am thoroughly persuaded I shall never get there."

The next day a grand procession was made, in which the host, by way of triumph, was carried in state under a canopy.

These eminent persons, being thus convicted of heresy, and delivered over to the secular arm, various were the opinions of men concerning them. Some thought the queen was inclined to mercy; and it was confidently reported that the three bishops would be removed, indeed, from interfering publicly with religion; but that, very liberally pensioned, they should in other respects have no cause to complain: while some again as positively affirmed, their measure would be very hard; as the queen, it was well known, would never forgive the hand they had had in her mother's divorce, and in the separation from the Church of Rome. But these were only the popular conjectures of the time, none of them founded on truth; for the counsels which determined the fates of these great men had not yet taken birth.

CHAPTER XIII.

QUEEN MARY, how zealous soever in the cause of popery, was not yet at leisure to attend the settlement of it. She had in general schemed it; but had laid out no measures. Civil affairs were at this time more her concern than ecclesiastical. The tower was full of state-prisoners, yet undisposed of; her title to the crown was not yet confirmed, nor her cabinet formed: a dangerous insurrection had been moved in Essex; and a seditious spirit was still at work in

many parts of the nation, particularly in the capital, discovering itself in riots and loud murmurs. To these things the queen's marriage succeeded, as another obstacle to the immediate settlement of religion.

At length, however, an area was cleared for the scene of blood about to be exhibited; and from this time to the conclusion of the queen's reign, the establishment of popery was the single point in view; every national concern, in the meantime, both at home and abroad, being either made subservient to it, or neglected.

The first effort of the ministry was to gain a parliamentary concurrence. King Edward's laws against popery were still in force, and the nation of course in a state of separation from Rome. But in those days, when prerogative ran high, the parliament was little more than an echo to the cabinet. The queen, therefore, found it an easy matter to arm herself with what powers she wanted. One act cancelled a whole reign; the statutes against heresy were revived; and England was again prepared for the popish yoke.

An account of these happy events was presently despatched to Rome, where it created the face of a jubilee. The pope laid aside his long-conceived displeasure; accepted the penitent nation; and easily consented to send over Cardinal Pole into England, to make up the breach, in quality of his legate.

Cardinal Pole, of the blood royal of England, was as much known in the world as any

churchman of his time; and as generally esteemed. He might have been at the head of the Reformation under Henry VIII.; but he chose rather to court the favours of the pope; with whom to ingratiate himself, he treated Henry, then beginning to innovate, in a manner which drew upon him a bill of attainder. But as Rome was the situation he chose, his exile was the less grievous. Here his influence was so great, that he aspired to the papacy; and he might have carried his point if his honesty had permitted him to have engaged thoroughly in the intrigues of the conclave. This disappointment awaked his philosophy, and he retired from the world into a monastery of Benedictines near Verona. Here he was contemplating the vanity of all earthly things, when he received a gracious letter from the queen of England, pressing his return to his native country, with all assurances of favour. Immediately his eyes were opened; and he found that, instead of sound philosophy, he had been indulging only a reverie of melancholy. As soon as possible, therefore, he set out for England; where he was received in great form, and placed at the head of ecclesiastical affairs. And, to do him justice, he became his station. He was a great and a well-meaning man; moderate in his opinions, and prudent in his behaviour; and would certainly have prevented those reproaches on his religion which this reign occasioned had his resolution been equal to his judgment and the kindness of his heart.

The parliament having, with all obsequiousness, done beyond what was expected toward the introduction of popery, and being now no longer wanted, was dissolved about the beginning of the year 1555.

The cardinal immediately began to act. Calling a council, therefore, of bishops, he proposed to their consideration the settlement of religion. And when many things had been said on that subject, and some things agreed on, they fell next on the treatment of heretics. "For my own part," said the cardinal, "I think we should be content with the public restoration of religion; and instead of irritating our adversaries by a rigorous execution of the revived statutes, I could wish that every bishop in his diocess would try the more winning expedients of gentleness and persuasion." He then urged the example of the Emperor Charles V., who, by a severe persecution of the Lutherans, involved himself in many difficulties, and purchased nothing but dishonour.

To this the bishop of Winchester answered, that, in his opinion, it was the same thing not to have a law, and not to execute one; that some blood must be shed; that he was not an advocate for a general massacre; to shake the leaves, he said, was of little avail; he would have the axe laid to the root of the tree; the bishops, and most forward preachers, ought certainly to die; the rest were of no consequence.

He had scarce sat down, when the bishop of London, who always took his temper from Win-

chester, starting up, vehemently prosecuted the same subject, and having said many things with great fierceness of language, concluded with freely offering himself to be the minister of the severest measures they could propose. "I cannot," said he, "my lords, act canonically anywhere but in my own diocese; and there I shall desire no man's help or countenance. And for those who are not in my jurisdiction, let them only be sent up to me, and lodged in any of my prisons; and when I have got them there, God do so to Bonner, and more also, if one of them escape me."

Others spoke in the council, but all in the same violent strain. The result was, a commission was issued out by the cardinal, empowering Winchester, London, and other bishops, to try and examine heretics, agreeably to the laws which were now revived.

Then followed times unparalleled in English story; when all sober men beheld with horror furious bigots dragging away with horrid zeal men, women, and children, guilty of no civil offence, by companies together, and delivering them up to tortures and cruel death; when they saw a religion breathing peace and charity, propagated by such acts of blood as would have disgraced even the rites of a heathen Moloch. The whole nation stood aghast. Fear, and distrust, and jealousy were spread through every part; and forced men into retirements, where they mourned in secret a parent, a brother, a son, the hopes of their family, singled out for

their conspicuous piety. Happy were they who, escaping the inquisition of those times, fled naked and destitute into foreign countries, where they found a retreat even in exile.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE rage of this persecution had now continued, yet unabated, near three quarters of a year. The archbishop of Canterbury, and the two bishops, Ridley and Latimer, were still in prison, unmolested; and they who were acquainted with the bishop of Winchester's maxims, and knew that he had the direction of affairs, were surprised at this lenity, and at a loss for the reason of it.

In answer to this popular inquiry, it was given out, that "an oversight had been committed in condemning these bishops before the statutes on which they were condemned had been revived; that a commission, therefore, from Rome was necessary for a new trial; that this had been sent for, but the delays of that court must be borne with." And, in part, this was fact; for they had, indeed, been too hasty in condemning the three bishops. However, afterward, the whole truth appeared, when it was found that these delays, which had been charged upon the court of Rome, were really occasioned by the bishop of Winchester himself.

It was the secret grief of that ambitious prelate, that there was one still higher than himself in ecclesiastical affairs. The cardinal's hat on the head of Pole, and the pope's authority, had long been the objects of his envy. With all his subtlety and address, therefore, he was now secretly working the cardinal's ruin. He had his agents in Rome, who were throwing out hints in the conclave that the bishop of Winchester wanted an associate of equal spirit with himself; that the legate was not hearty in the business; and that his lenity to the Protestants only too much showed his inclination toward them.

The circumstances of the time, likewise, favoured Gardiner's ambition. For he knew that Cardinal Carraffa, who had just obtained the pontificate, had no friendship for Pole, with whom formerly he had sharp disputes. The designing prelate, therefore, was in great hopes that his scheme would take effect; and when Pole was removed, he made no doubt but he had interest to succeed him.

But this was only an under-part in his scheme. He knew, and was distressed in knowing, that the archbishopric of Canterbury, upon the death of Cranmer, was intended for the legate. This dignity his heart was set on, of which he made himself sure upon the removal of Pole. With this view he did what he could to delay the execution of Cranmer, till the legate was recalled, and his own head ready for the mitre.

These delays, however, at length grew noto-

rious, and occasioned some clamour among the warmer papists; and Winchester, finding himself pressed by the curiosity of some and the zeal of others, was obliged, in part at least, to abandon his scheme. It was his original design, as less liable to suspicion, to have treated the three bishops in the same way. However, now, to wipe off the offence that had been taken, he resolved to give up Ridley and Latimer to their immediate fate; and to delay Cranmer's execution, by procuring a different form of process against him.

The chief obstacle, therefore, being now removed, a commission soon came from Rome, directed to the cardinal; who immediately named the bishops of Lincoln, Gloucester, and Bristol, his commissioners, to execute it.

The rumour of this commission spread an universal alarm. For with regard to the fates of these eminent persons, the expectation of men had now almost totally subsided; and, being renewed, held them doubly attentive: the exulting papist on one side, and the desponding Protestant on the other, stood prepared to see in this stroke the completion of their hopes and fears.

Great were the preparations in the meantime at Oxford to receive the commissioners. For as this was the first judicial act since the restoration of popery, in which the pope interfered, the utmost respect which the university could pay was deemed only a proper testimony of its zeal. These compliments being sufficiently discharged, on the 30th of September

1555, the commissioners, seating themselves in great state in the divinity school, the two bishops were called before them. The bishop of London was first questioned. Then Bishop Latimer was brought in; to whom Lincoln, who was a polite and very eloquent man, spoke to this effect:—

“This parchment, Mr. Latimer, contains a commission from my lord cardinal, under his holiness, directed to me and these two reverend prelates, by which we are enjoined to examine you upon some points of faith in which your orthodoxy is doubted; we are required to press you to revoke your errors, if you still hold these pernicious opinions; and to cut you off from the church if you persist, and give you up to the civil power.

“Consider, Mr. Latimer, it is not more than twenty years since these novel opinions got footing among us. Till then, the authority of the Church of Rome was universally acknowledged. By what means it was first questioned in England, and on what unjustifiable motives a schism was occasioned, I might easily show at large;—but I spare the dead. Let it suffice, that the nation, having long sought rest in a multiplicity of new inventions, and found none, hath again submitted itself to its mother church; and by one unanimous act, the result of penitence and contrition, hath atoned for its apostacy. Why then should you oppose the unanimity of a whole people? Confess your fault, and unite your penitence with theirs. It hath

been a common error ; let it be a general humiliation. Among such numbers the shame of each individual will be lost. Come then in peace ; for we will kindly receive you into the bosom of that church whose authority, derived from the first apostle, depends on scriptures, fathers, and councils ; that church, within which there can be no error, and without which there can be no salvation.

“ Let me then, in the spirit of charity, beseech you to accept this offered mercy. Let me even implore you not to reduce us to the fatal necessity of cutting you off from the church, and leaving you to the vengeance of the civil power. Spare yourself ; accelerate not your death ; consider the condition of your soul ; remember it is the cause, not the death, that maketh the martyr. Humble yourself ; captivate your understanding ; subdue your reason ; submit yourself to the determination of the church ; and, for God’s sake force us not to do all we may do ; but let us rest in what we have done.”

Here the bishop pausing, Mr. Latimer stood up and thanked him for his gentle treatment of him ; but, at the same time, assured him how vain it was to expect from him any acknowledgment of the pope. He did not believe, he said, that any such jurisdiction had been given to the see of Rome, nor had the bishops of Rome behaved as if their power had been from God. He then quoted a popish book, which had lately been written, to show how grossly the papists would misrepresent Scripture ; and

concluded with saying, that he thought the clergy had nothing to do with temporal power, nor ought ever to be intrusted with it; and that their commission from their Master, in his opinion, extended no further than to the discharge of their pastoral functions.

To this the bishop of Lincoln replied, that he thought his style not quite so decent as it might be; and that as to the book which he quoted, he knew nothing of it.

At this the old bishop seemed to express his surprise; and told him, that although he did not know the author of it, yet it was written by a person of name, the bishop of Gloucester.

This produced some mirth among the audience, as the bishop of Gloucester sat then upon the bench. That prelate, finding himself thus publicly challenged, rose up, and, addressing himself to Mr. Latimer, paid him some compliments upon his learning, and then spoke in vindication of his book. But his zeal carrying him too far, the bishop of Lincoln, interrupting him, said, "We came not here, my lord, to dispute with Mr. Latimer, but to take his answer to certain articles which shall be proposed to him."

These articles were much the same as those on which he had been brought to dispute the year before. They were accordingly read, and Mr. Latimer answered them all as he then did; at the same time protesting, which protestation he begged might be registered, that, notwithstanding his answers to the pope's commissioners, he by no means acknowledged the authority

of the pope. The notaries having taken down his answers and protestation, the bishop of Lincoln told him, that as far as he could he would show lenity to him; that the answers which he had now given in should not be prejudicial to him; but that he should be called upon the next morning, when he might make what alterations he pleased; and that he hoped in God he would then find him in a better temper. To this the old bishop answered, that he begged they would do with him then just what they pleased, and that he might not trouble them, nor they him, another day; that, as to his opinions, he was fixed in them; and that any respite would be needless. The bishop, however, told him that he must appear the next morning; and then dissolved the assembly.

Accordingly, the next morning, the commissioners sitting in the same form, he was brought in; when the bishop of Lincoln told him, that although he might justly have proceeded to judgment against him the day before, especially as he himself had required it, yet he could not help postponing it one day longer. "In hopes," said he, "sir, that you might reason yourself into a better way of thinking, and at length embrace, what we all so much desire, that mercy which our holy church now, for the last time, offereth to you."

"Alas! my lord," answered Mr. Latimer, "your indulgence is to no purpose. When a man is convinced of a truth, even to deliberate is unlawful. I am fully resolved against the

Church of Rome ; and, once for all, my answer is, I never will embrace its communion. If you urge me further, I will reply as St. Cyprian did, on a like occasion. He stood before his judges upon a charge of heresy : and being asked which were more probably of the church of Christ, he and his party, who were everywhere despised ; or they, his judges, who were everywhere in esteem ; he answered resolutely, that Christ had decided that point when he mentioned it as a mark of his disciples, that they should take up their cross and follow him. If this then, my lords, be one of the characteristics of the Christian Church, whether shall we denominate by that name the Church of Rome, which hath always been a persecutor, or that small body of Christians which is persecuted by it ?”

“ You mention, sir,” replied Lincoln, “ with a bad grace, your cause and St. Cyprian’s together ; they are wholly different.”

“ No, my lord,” answered the old bishop, “ his was the word of God, and so is mine.”

But the bishop of Lincoln, not caring to have this argument moved any further, replied, that he exceeded his commission in giving leave for any reasoning or debates ; that he had granted this indulgence, in hopes of its success ; but observing a contrary effect, he would not, he said, trespass any longer upon the patience of his audience by these unprofitable altercations. He proceeded, therefore, immediately to take Mr. Latimer’s final answer to the arti-

cles; which he gave as he had done before, and accompanied with the same protestation.

The notaries having now closed the books, the bishop of Lincoln, who, through the whole of this cruel business, seems to have acted with as much decency and humanity as was possible, once more pressed Mr. Latimer in a very pathetic manner to retract his opinion; but being answered in a steady negative, he at length passed sentence upon him.

Mr. Latimer then asked him, whether there lay any appeal from this judgment. "To whom," said the bishop, "would you appeal?" "To the next general council," answered Mr. Latimer, "that shall be regularly assembled." "It will be a long time," replied the bishop, "before Europe will see such a council as you mean." Having said this, he committed Mr. Latimer to the custody of the mayor, and dissolved the assembly.

On the same day, likewise, sentence was passed on the bishop of London.

The 16th of October, about a fortnight from this time, was fixed for their execution.

In the meantime, as it was feared this affair might occasion some disturbance, the queen wrote to the Lord Williams of Thame, a popular nobleman in those parts, and ordered him to arm a body of the militia, and repair immediately to Oxford.

These preparations, and what others were necessary, being made, the last scene of this tragedy was opened.

CHAPTER XV.

ON the north side of the town, near Baliol College, a spot of ground was chosen for the place of execution. Hither, on the 16th, the vice-chancellor of Oxford, and other persons of distinction, appointed for that purpose, repaired early in the morning; and the Lord Williams having drawn his guard round the place, the prisoners were sent for.

The bishop of London first entered this dreadful circle, accompanied by the mayor; soon after, Bishop Latimer was brought in. The former was dressed in his episcopal habit; the latter, as usual, in his prison attire. This difference in their dress made a moving contrast, and augmented the concern of the spectators; the bishop of London showing what they had before been; Bishop Latimer, what they now were.

While they stood before the stake, about to prepare themselves for the fire, they were informed they must first hear a sermon; and soon after Dr. Smith, of whom mention hath already been made, ascended a pulpit prepared for that purpose, and preached on these words of St. Paul: "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." In his discourse he treated the two bishops with great inhumanity, aspersing both their characters and tenets.

The sermon being ended, the bishop of Lon-

don was beginning to say something in defence of himself, when the vice-chancellor, starting up suddenly from his seat, ran toward him, and, stopping his mouth with his hand, told him, that if he was going to recant, he should have leave; but he should be permitted in nothing further. The bishop thus checked, looking round, with a noble air, cried out, "We commit our cause then to Almighty God."

Immediately an officer stepped up, and acquainted them, that at their leisure they might now make ready for the stake. The spectators burst into tears, when they saw these two venerable men preparing for death. When they considered, as Mr. Fox observes, their preferments, the places of honour they held in the commonwealth, the favour they stood in with their princes, their great learning, and greater piety, they were overwhelmed with sorrow to see so much dignity, so much honour, so much estimation, so many godly virtues, the study of so many years, and so much excellent learning about to be consumed in one moment.

Mr. Latimer, having thrown off the old gown which was wrapped about him, appeared in a shroud prepared for the purpose; and "whereas before," says Mr. Fox, "he seemed a withered and crooked old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold."

Being thus ready, he recommended his soul to God, and delivered himself to the executioner; saying to the bishop of London, "We

shall this day, my lord, light such a candle in England as shall never be extinguished."

But I will draw a veil over the conclusion of this shocking scene; and only add, that he went through his last sufferings with that composure and firmness of mind, which nothing but a sound faith and a good conscience could produce.

Such was the life of Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester; one of the leaders of that glorious army of martyrs who introduced the Reformation in England. He had a happy temper, formed on the principles of Christian philosophy. Such was his cheerfulness, that none of the accidents of life could discompose him. Such was his fortitude, that not even the severest trials could unman him. He had a collected spirit, and on no occasion wanted a resource; he could retire within himself, and hold the world at defiance.

And as danger could not daunt, so neither could ambition allure him. Though conversant in courts, and intimate with princes, he preserved to the last, a rare instance of moderation, his primeval plainness.

In his profession he was indefatigable; and that he might bestow as much time as possible on the active part of it, he allowed himself only those hours for his private studies when the busy world is at rest; constantly rising, at all seasons of the year, by two in the morning.

How conscientious he was in the discharge of the public parts of his office, we have many

examples. No man could persuade more forcibly; no man could exert, on proper occasions, a more commanding severity. The wicked, in whatever station, he rebuked with censorian dignity, and awed vice more than the penal laws. He was not esteemed a very learned man, for he cultivated only useful learning; and that, he thought, lay in a very narrow compass. He never engaged in worldly affairs, thinking that a clergyman ought to employ himself only in his profession. Thus he lived rather a good, than what the world calls a great man. He had not those commanding talents which give superiority in business; but for honesty and sincerity of heart, for true simplicity of manners, for apostolic zeal in the cause of religion, and for every virtue both of a public and private kind that should adorn the life of a Christian, he was eminent and exemplary beyond most men of his own or of any other time; well deserving that evangelical commendation, "With the testimony of a good conscience, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world."

THE END.

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